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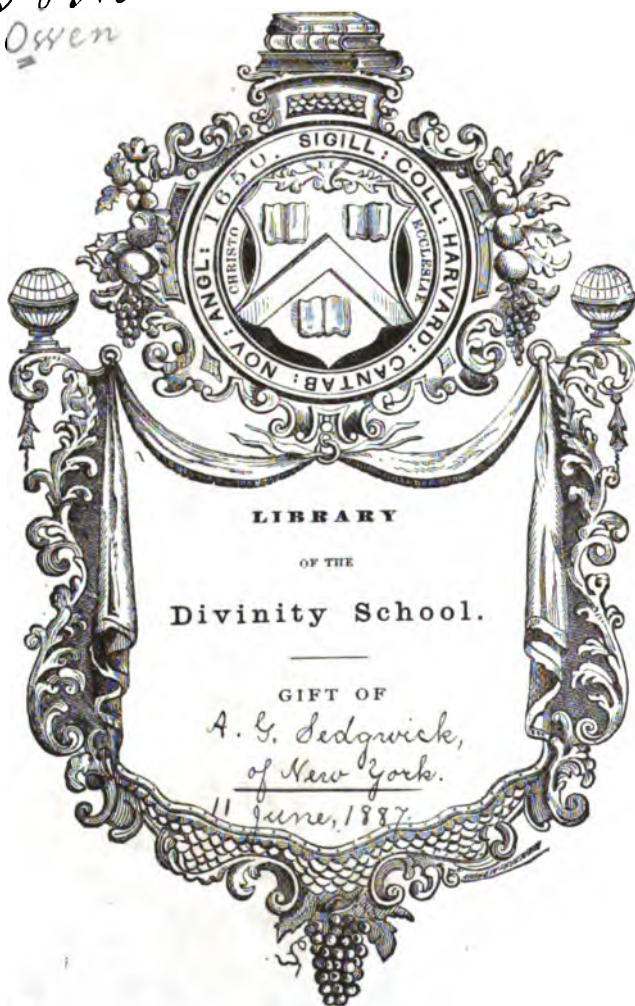


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AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS;
WITH THE
PRELIMINARY EXERCITATIONS.

BY JOHN OWEN, D. D.

REVISED AND ABRIDGED;

WITH

A FULL AND INTERESTING LIFE OF THE AUTHOR, A COPIOUS
INDEX, &c.

BY EDWARD WILLIAMS, D. D.

Search the Scriptures.....JOHN v, 39.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.
VOL. III.

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AN
EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 1.

For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

§1. Introduction. §2. The chapter and particularly this verse analyzed. §3. (I.) The High Priest's origin. §4. (II.) The nature of his office. §5. (II.) The end of the priesthood. §6. Observations.

§1. **I**F we consider the *relation* of these words to the foregoing parts of the epistle, (which treated of the person of Christ, his *kingly* and *prophetical* offices,) they contain an entrance into a full and particular description of the *sacerdotal* office of the Messiah, with its excellency and benefits, which was the principal design of the epistle. And it was a design highly important; for besides the excellency of the doctrine in itself, and the inestimable benefits which the whole church received thereby, it was, on many accounts, peculiarly necessary for the Hebrews.

§2. There are three general parts of this chapter. *First*; a description of the office and duties of an high priest, verse 1—4. *Secondly*; the application of this general description to the person and priesthood of Jesus Christ in particular, verse 5—10. *Thirdly*; an occasional reproof and expostulation about their backwardness in learning the mysteries of the gospel, ver. 11—4.

In this verse, the general description of an high priest is given; from his original; "he is taken from among men." From the nature of his office; he "is ordained for men in things pertaining to God." From the special *end* of it; "to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin." And this subject, now first professedly entered upon, (but still with respect to the Old Testament church) is pursued with sundry occasional digressions, to the end of the tenth chapter.

§8. (I.) We have the description of an high priest from his original. "For every high priest taken from among men." All the males of the family of Aaron were equal as to the priesthood; but there was one who was the head and prince of the rest, whose office was not distinct from theirs, but in the discharge of which, and his preparation for it, there were many things peculiarly appropriated to him, which are distinctly appointed and enumerated in several places. The whole office was primarily vested in him, the other priests being as it were his assistants, and a nursery for future succession. The whole nature of the *type* was preserved in him alone.

One *single* high priest had been sufficient to have represented the priesthood of Christ; but because God would have that done *constantly*, during the continuance of that church state, they were to be multiplied by succession. And since by reason of their multiplied carnal services, no *one* man was able to discharge the whole office, there were others added to assist him, which were so far also types of Christ, as they were partakers of his office. But because the office was principally conferred on and vested in the high priest, and because many important parts of the duty of it were appropriated to him; as also, because his glorious vestments, made for beauty and glory, to

represent the excellency and holiness of the person of Christ, were to be worn by none but him; he alone is singled out as the principal representative of the Lord Jesus Christ in his office.

(Εξ ανθρωπων γαμβανομενος.) *Taken from among men.* This expression is not a part of the subject of the proposition, but what is attributed to every high priest; every one who is so, is to be taken from among men. The sense may be supplied by a copulative—*“and is ordained.”* He is (λαμβανομενος, *assumptus*,) *taken from among men*, separated from them, is no more of the same rank; (εξ ανθρωπων) *from among men*; that is, first, he is (*naturæ humanæ particeps*) *“partaker in common of human nature,”* with the rest of mankind;—neither the divine nature, nor the angelic is capable of the exercise of it for men; which is principally intended: and *secondly*, before his assumption to this office, he was among the number of common men; as having nothing in his nature to prefer him above them. So was it with Aaron; he was a common man amongst his brethren, yea, a mean man in bondage before his call to office. The *former* of these declares what every high priest is and ought to be; the latter what the first legal high priest *actually was*. Whatever is essential to the office of high priest, without which it could not be duly executed, is found in Christ, in a far more perfect and excellent manner than in the priests of the law, without any of their imperfections. It was *essential* to the office itself that he should be partaker of human nature, but it was not so, that he should be absolutely in the common state of all men, antecedently to his call to office.

§4. (II.) The next part of the general description of a high priest is from the nature of his office. He *“is ordained for men in things pertaining to God.”*

(ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων) *for men*; the proposition (ὡς) is sometimes (*vice, or, loco,*) *in the stead*, sometimes (*pro,*) *for*, only as it denotes the final cause; as to do a thing “for” the good of men. 2 Tim. ii, 10. And both these senses may have place here. For where the first intention is, the latter is always included. He that doth any thing in the stead of another, doth it always for his good. And the high priest might be so far said to stand and act in stead of other men, as he appeared in their behalf, represented their persons, pleaded their cause, and confessed their sins: but in their behalf, or “for their good,” and advantage, to perform what on their part is with God to be performed, is evidently intended in this place. (καθολοῦται τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν) *is ordained in things pertaining to God*. The verb is used most frequently in a neuter or passive sense, and in this place it can be no otherwise. So the apostle explains himself, chap. viii, 3; “Every high priest (καθολοῦται) *is ordained* to offer gifts and sacrifices; which place expoundeth this. And two things are intended in the word; God’s *designation* and *appointment*; and—actual consecration according to the law. So was it in the case of Aaron. And this *latter* part, or his ordination, belonged to the weakness and imperfection of that priesthood, so that he could not be consecrated without the sacrifices of other things. But the Lord Christ, being both priest and sacrifice himself, needed no such ordination, nor was capable of it. His ordination therefore consisted *merely* in the divine designation and appointment, as we shall see.

“In things pertaining to God.” The expression (τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν) is elliptical and sacred, but what is intended by it, is sufficiently manifest. The things that were “to be done with or towards God,” in his

worship, to answer the duties and ends of the priestly office; that is to do the things whereby God might be appeased, and reconciled, his anger being turned away, chap. ii, 17.

§5. (III.) The remaining part of the description, in this verse, is from the end of the priesthood. (*ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρα καὶ θυσίας*) "That he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins." The Hebrew word (קריב) compriseth the whole sacerdotal performance, from first to last; in *bringing, slaying, and burning* the sacrifices according to the law, (see Lev. i, 2—5, and our exertations concerning the Sacrifices of the Jews.) The object of this sacerdotal action is (*δῶρα καὶ θυσίας*) *gifts and offerings*; if a distinction be here supposed, I should think that by "gifts," all free-will offerings might be intended; and by "sacrifices" those that were determined as to occasions, times, and seasons, by the law. But I rather judge that the apostle useth these *two words* in general to express all sorts of sacrifices for sins, and therefore that expression (*υπερμαρτυρίαν*) *for sins*, may refer to (*δῶρα*) *gifts*, as well as (*θυσίας*) *sacrifices*.

§6. (IV.) From the words thus expounded we may draw the following brief *observations*:

1. Christ's participation of our nature, as necessary for the discharge of the office of an High Priest on our behalf, is a great ground of consolation to believers, a manifest evidence that he is, and will be compassionate towards them. See chap. ii, ver. 10, 11, &c.

2. It was the entrance of sin that made the office of priesthood necessary; and therefore it was of infinite grace that such an appointment was made. Without it all holy intercourse between God and man must have ceased; for neither were the *persons* of sinners meet to approach God; nor was any *service* which

they could perform, suited to the great end which man was to look after—peace with God. Again, men in their own persons had nothing to *offer* to God but their *moral duties*, which the law of their creation and the covenant of works required of them. Now these were no way meet nor able to make *atonement* for sin,—the great work now to be done with God, and without which every thing else that can be done by sinners is of no consideration. God therefore appointing a new *service* for this end—that of sacrifices; appointed also a new way,—the performance of a priest in the name and behalf of others. And a most gracious appointment it was, as that on which all blessed intercourse with God, and all hopes with him, solely depend. Though the occasion was grievous, the relief is glorious.

3. Where there is no proper propitiary sacrifice, there is no proper priest. Every priest is to offer sacrifices for sin; that is, to make *atonement*; and therefore Jesus Christ alone is the High Priest of his people, for he alone could offer a sacrifice for our sins to make atonement.

4. It was a great privilege which the church enjoyed of old in the divinely appointed representation of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, in their own *typical* priests and sacrifices: but much more glorious is our privilege under the gospel, since our Lord Jesus hath taken upon him and actually discharged this part of his office, in offering an absolutely perfect and complete sacrifice for sin. Here is the foundation of all our peace and happiness.

5. What is to be done with God on the account of sin, that it may be expiated and pardoned, and that the people of God who have sinned, may be accepted and blessed, is all actually done for them, by Jesus

Christ their High Priest, in the sacrifice for sin which he offered on their behalf. He was ordained (*τα σπονς σπον* *θεου*) "to do all things with God," that were to be done for us; that we might be pardoned, sanctified, and saved. This he undertook when he undertook his office. If any one thing be omitted, as good all were so; for assuredly none besides himself in heaven or earth could do ought in this matter; but he hath faithfully, mercifully, and fully done *all* that was to be done with God on our behalf. Particularly, as the grand and only foundation of happy intercourse between heaven and earth, he hath offered that *great sacrifice* which was promised and represented from the foundation of the world.

VERSE 2.

Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for he himself is compassed with infirmity.

§1. Introductory remarks, and the subject stated. §2. (I.) A necessary qualification of a High Priest. §3. (II.) The peculiar object of his sacerdotal acts. §4. (III.) A special reason of the qualification. §5—8. (IV.) Observations. §9. Additional observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle having before proposed, doth in this and the ensuing verses farther pursue, a description of an High Priest, according to the law; that whatever was useful or excellent in such an High Priest, was to be found in a more eminent manner in Jesus Christ, the only real and proper High Priest of the church; as also that whatever was weak and infirm in such a Priest—necessarily attending his frail and sinful condition, which either eclipsed the glory, or weakened the efficacy of the office he discharged—had no place in him at all. To understand, therefore, aright the comparison here made between the High Priest under the law, and Jesus Christ, we must observe:

1. That all real necessary, useful conditions and qualifications of an High Priest, required by the law, were found in Jesus Christ, as our High Priest; whereby he answered the representations that were made of him under the Old Testament.

2. That whatever adhered necessarily to the persons of the High Priests, as they were sinful men, "partakers of our nature as depraved," was not to be sought for, nor found in him. And to these there is added, as a necessary result of both,

3. That sundry things wherein the singular eminency and perfection of this office doth consist, were so peculiar to him, as that they never were nor could be represented by the High Priest constituted such by the law. To this purpose is the observation of Chrysostom on the place: "First, he sets down the things that are common to both; then declares wherein he (Christ) excelleth; for so an excellency is set out by comparison, when in some things there is an equality, in others an excellency on one side,—and; if it be otherwise, there is no comparison."

There are three things in the words:

First, a great and necessary *qualification* or endowment of an High Priest; he is one who is "able to have compassion."

Secondly, the peculiar *object* of his office—acts, proceeding from, and suited to that qualification; "those who are ignorant, and who wander from the way."

Thirdly, a special *reason* of the qualification; because he himself is compassed with infirmity."

§2. (I.) "Who can have compassion." "Who can," the word (*δυναμις*) properly signifies *natural ability*; but, in a secondary sense, denotes also a *moral power*, with respect to the bounds of our duty. So (*illud possumus quod jure possumus*) "that we can do, which

we can do lawfully." Men can do many things naturally, that they cannot do morally; that is, justly. One (*δυσκίνητος, potens*) *able*, is as much as one (*μενος, ἀλκιμος*) *morally qualified*, with dispositions and inclinations suited to his work. It includes—both the *denial* of an incapacity for what is affirmed; he is *not* of such a nature, of such a condition, or so qualified, as that he should be unable; that is, unfit, or unfit for this work;—and also an *assertion* of a positive inclination and ability for it; who is *able*, hath nothing in nature or state to hinder him; is disposed to it, and ready for it.

The word, (*μετριοτατης*) *to have compassion*, is nowhere used in the New Testament, but in this place; and, as most suppose, it is here used in a sense new and peculiar. Hence have interpreters so variously rendered it. In other writers it signifies constantly "*moderate affections*." Thence (*μετριοτης*, is *modice*, or *moderate affectus*; *qui modum tenet in animi perturbationibus*): "one who is moderate in his affections; who exceeds not due measures in perturbations of mind." So (*μετριοτης*, is *moderate ferre*): *to bear any thing*, especially provocations to anger, *moderately*, without any great commotion of affections, so as to be stirred up to wrath, severity, and displeasure. If the word be used in this sense, then respect is had to what of *provocation* and *exasperation* in those who are ignorant and out of the way. The high priest is one who is fit and able to bear, "*moderately*" and quietly, with the failings, misdeeds, and sins of those for whom he executes his office, not breaking out into any anger, or "*excess*" of indignation against them, by reason of their infirmities. And this applied to Jesus Christ is a matter of the highest encouragement and consolation to believers. Were there not an absolute

sufficiency of this disposition in him, and that as to all occurrences, he must needs cast as off in displeasure. But rather, by the original word (*μετριο*) in this composition, the apostle intends the just and due measure of a disposition to compassion; yet not implying that he sets bounds to it with respect to any excess; he is one that doth not come short herein, who will not fail in any instance, who hath a sufficient measure of it to answer the condition and necessities of all with whom he hath to do. And this doth not infer a new sense distinct from that before mentioned; but farther explains it, according to the intention of the apostle, in the peculiar use of the word.

I see no reason to confine myself to either of these senses precisely; but do rather think, that the apostle on purpose made use of this term to include them both. For suppose the object of this qualification of the high priest to be the ignorance and wanderings of his people, considered as provoking to himself, as every sin is attended with provocation, then the word imports one (*qui potest moderate ferre*) "who is able to bear with them, with that due moderation of mind and affection as not to have any very vehement commotions of the one or the other against them." For, if he should be liable to such impression, he would be provoked to call them "rebels," as did Moses, and to say, as in the prophet, "I will feed you no more, that that dieth let it die," Zech. xi, 9. But he is able to bear with them patiently and meekly, so as to continue in the faithful discharge of his office towards them. This Moses was not able always to do, Num. xi, 12, "Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say to me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child?" Yet this is required in an high point; and that

he should no more cast off poor sinners for their "ignorance and wanderings," than a nursing father should cast away a sucking child for its crying or forwardness. So our apostle, in his imitation of Jesus Christ, affirms, that in the church he "was gentle among them, as a nurse cherisheth her children," 1 Thes. ii, 7. Not easy to be provoked, not ready to take offence, or cast off the necessary care. Jesus Christ our High Priest is able, with all meekness and gentleness, with patience and moderation, to bear the infirmities, sins, and provocations of his people, even as a nurse, or a nursing father, beareth with the weakness and forwardness of a poor infant. On the other hand: suppose the immediate object of this qualification of the high priest, to be the sins, temptations, and infirmities of his people, as they are grievous, troublesome, and *dangerous to themselves*, then the term signifies his nature and disposition, as meet, prepared and inclined so to commiserate, and consequently to relieve, as shall be sufficient on all occasions. He is one that wants no part nor degree of a compassionate frame of heart towards them. Both these the word signifies as diversely applied, and both of them, if I mistake not, are intended by the apostle; and for this end, that they might be both included, did he make use of this singular word. At least, I am not able to embrace either of these senses to the exclusion of the other. An high priest, therefore, is one who can quietly bear with the weaknesses and sinful provocations of them that are ignorant and wander out of the way; as also to pity them to such a degree as never to be wanting to their help.

§3. (II.) The compassion described, accompanied with meek and patient bearing, is exercised towards—"the ignorant, and them that are out of the way."

Whereas there are among the people of God some, nay *many*, that are ignorant and out of the way; the compassion of the High Priest is to be extended to them *all*; yea, this qualification doth respect them *chiefly*, so that they need not to be discouraged, but may boldly make use of his gracious aids in every time of distress. But properly it is the "*whole people of God*," who are thus described, as they lie under the care and eye of their High Priest. But because also it is their duty to make application to him for their relief, which they will not do without a sense of their want; it is required, moreover, in this description, that they be burdened with an apprehension of the guilt and danger of their "*ignorance and wanderings*." (Τῶν ἀγνοσι) "To them that are *ignorant*;" not the mere affliction of the mind, or ignorance itself, but the consequence and effects of it in actual sins, are principally intended. To such as are obnoxious to sinning, and actually do sin, through the ignorance and darkness of their minds. There was under the law a sacrifice provided for them who sinned, (לֵוִי טָמֵא) *through ignorance*, or error, Lev. iv, Num xv, 27—30, "If any soul sin through *ignorance*, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly; when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him. But the soul that doth ought *presumptuously*, with an high hand, the same reproacheth the Lord, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." And it is so also under the gospel; for after men profess an interest in the sacrifice of Christ for their justification and sanctification, there are sins they may fall into *presumptuously*, and with an high hand, for which there is no relief. "For if we sin wilfully

after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries," Heb. x, 26, 27. All other sins whatever come within the rank of them which are committed by "ignorance," or error of mind. Of these there is no man that liveth, and is not guilty, Eccl. vii, 20, 1 Sam. ii, 2. Yea, they are so multiplied that no man living can understand them, Psal. xix, 13. By sins of ignorance then are not understood merely those which arose (*ex ignorantia juris*) "from ignorance of the law," doing what it forbade, as not knowing it was forbidden, and omitting what was commanded, as not knowing it was commanded; but sins of ignorance are also committed when the mind, or practical understanding (being corrupted or entangled by the power of sin, and its apparently advantageous circumstances) doth not attend to its duty, or the rule of all its actions, whence arises actual sin. And this is the principal cause of all the sins of our life. He adds; (*οι πλανημενοι*) "*them that wander out of the way.*" This epistle mentions the error of the *heart*, "they err always in their hearts;" and the error of our *ways*, as here. The former is the heart's dislike of the ways of God, and voluntary relinquishment of them, which answers to the presumptuous sinning before mentioned, and is no object of compassion either in God, or our High Priest, see chap. iii, 11. A wandering in men's *ways* may be; when yet their hearts are upright with God; so it is said of Asa, that his heart was perfect all his days, 2 Chron. xv, 17, yet his great wanderings from the ways of God are recorded, chap. xv, 7—12. Who then are these (*οι πλανημενοι*) *wanderers*? Even those who, by the power of their temptations, have been se-

duced and turned from the straight paths of holy obedience, and have wandered in some crooked paths of their own.

§4. (III.) The special reason of the qualifications is,—“for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” (Επει, quoniam) seeing it is so, (και αὐτος) “that even he himself; his own state and condition will mind him of his duty in this matter (περιεχεται ασθενειαν) is compassed with infirmity: this is more than if he had said that he was (ασθενης) weak and infirm. He is beset, and “compassed about on every hand with infirmity.” Nothing hinders but that we may take the word here in its most comprehensive signification, for infirmities of all sorts, *natural*, *moral*, and *occasional*. For the *first* sort do naturally attend the condition of human nature, and therefore are inseparable from him that would discharge aright the office of a priest. And the following verse affirming, that “for this cause,” it was necessary for him to “offer a sacrifice for himself,” declares directly, that his *moral* or simple infirmities are included. The high priest himself was subject to sin as the rest of the people. Whence there were peculiar sacrifices appointed for the anointed priest to offer for himself and his own sin. And for the *last*, or infirmities in bodily distempers, sickness, and death, it is a necessary consequent of the former. Wherefore, as these words respect them that go before, or yield a reason why the high priest is such a one as can have compassion on the ignorant, they express the infirmity of *nature*, which inclined him thereunto from a sense of his own weakness and sufferings. As they respect what ensues, ver. 3, they intend his *moral* or simple infirmities, with their consequences, from whence it was necessary that he should offer sacrifice for himself. And in the latter sense, the things intended be-

long intirely to the real High Priest; that natural infirmity whereof our Lord Christ had full experience, is every way sufficient to answer the ends of the priestly office. And this alone was that which qualified the legal high priest with due compassion; for his moral infirmity was of no advantage to him, so as to help his compassion towards the people, which was, as all other graces, weakened thereby: it is therefore mentioned by the apostle only, as a reason why he was appointed to offer sacrifice for himself, which Christ was not to do. Now Christ being absolutely free from this kind of infirmity, yet made sensible of one by the other, doth in a most perfect manner perform all that is needful to be done on our behalf.

§5. (IV.) *Obs.* 1. "Compassion," and meek forbearance in those from whom we expect help and relief, is a great motive and encouragement to faith, affiance, and expectation of those favors. No man will expect any good or kindness from one whom he looks upon as severe, incompassionate, and ready to lay hold on occasions of wrathful anger. Wherefore God himself doth not more properly, or in a more engaging manner, set forth any property of his nature, than he doth his *compassion*, long suffering, and forbearance towards sinners. And as he proposeth them to us for our encouragement, so he declares his approbation of our faith in them. "He delighteth in them that hope in his mercy," Psal. xxxiii, 18. Wherefore the great recompense that God gives to sinners from first to last, is from his *compassion* and forbearance. And for our Lord Jesus Christ, as mediator, we have evinced, that all things were so ordered with respect to him, that he might be filled with tender compassion and forbearance towards sinners, which we greatly stand in need of, and which is the greatest encourage-

ment of which we are made partakers. Considered either as to our sins or sufferings, we cannot maintain a life of faith without a due apprehension of it.

§6. *Obs. 2.* Wherefore the life of our souls is principally maintained upon this “compassion” of our High Priest: being able to bear with us in our provocations, and to pity us in our weakness and distresses. To this purpose is the promise concerning him, Isa. xl, 11. What believer is there that doth not constantly admire how the Lord Jesus Christ hath patiently borne with him in the frequency of his daily failings? There is not a day wherein we make good the engagements of our own hearts. And that we are yet accepted with him, is wholly owing to his being able to bear with us in all patience and gracious moderation.

§7. *Obs. 3.* Though every sin hath in it the whole nature of sin, rendering the sinner obnoxious to the curse of the law, yet there are several *degrees* of sin, some being accompanied with a greater guilt than others. The papists have a distinction of sins into *mortal* and *venial*, which is the foundation of one moiety of their superstition. The former, they say, are such as in their own nature deserve death eternal, so that there is no deliverance from the guilt of them without actual contrition and repentance: but the latter are slight and small sins, such as are easily expiated by an observance of some outward rites of the church, at least they endanger no man’s eternal salvation, whether repented of or not. The worst is but a turn in purgatory, or the *expense* of a pardon. Because this distinction is rejected by Protestants, they accuse them for teaching that all sins are equal. But this they do unjustly; for we maintain that there is a distinction of sins with respect to—the persons that commit them.

But whence is this difference? Is it that the sin is *less* in believers than in other men? or is it because God is *less displeased* with sin in them than the unbelieving? Nay, God is equally displeased with equal sins in whomsoever found; and if there be any difference, he is more displeased with sin in believers than in any others; but the difference ariseth *merely* from the *event*. Regenerate persons will, through grace, certainly use the means of grace and repentance for the obtaining of pardon, which the other will not; and if *they* also are assisted so to do, even they in like manner shall obtain forgiveness. No man therefore can take any true relief against the guilt of sin from his *state* and *condition*; which may be an aggravation, but can be no alleviation of it. Again, there are *degrees* of sin amongst the *unregenerate*, who live in a course of sin all their days. And sometimes here, but certainly hereafter, God deals with them not only according to their *state* of sin, and their *course* of sin, but according to the *degrees and aggravations* of sin in great variety. All do not sin equally, nor shall all be equally punished.

§8. *Obs. 4.* Our "ignorance" is both our calamity, our sin, and an occasion of many sins to us. Having declared that the high priest was first to offer sacrifices for the sins of men, and then that he was to be compassionate towards them, both in their sins and sorrows; the first instance which the apostle gives of those who are concerned herein, is of "them that are *ignorant*." How small a portion is it that we know of God! We cannot by searching find out the Almighty to perfection, such knowledge is too wonderful for us. If we know him so as to believe, fear, and obey him, it is all that is promised us in this life. Wherefore let the best of us take care that we be not

puffed up with a vain conceit of our knowledge. Alas! *how many* things are to be known in God, that we have no knowledge of; and nothing do we know as we ought, or as it shall be known. Let us endeavor, therefore, in the constant use of all means, to grow in the knowledge of God, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and the more we learn, the more we shall see is to be learned. Let us long for the time, or rather that eternity, when all these shades shall fly away; all darkness be removed from our minds, and all intercepting veils from about the Divine Being and glory; when we shall see him as he is, with open face, and know as we are known, which is the eternal life and blessedness of our souls. But while we are on earth, who is not sensible of the inconveniences and perplexities that he is continually cast into by the remains of darkness and ignorance? who is not sensible how much his love and obedience are weakened by them? Herein then our merciful High Priest exerciseth "compassion" towards us, and leads us on, if we are not slothfully wanting to ourselves, with fresh discoveries of divine light and truth, which—although they are not absolutely satisfactory to the soul, nor do utterly take away its thirst after the all-fulness of the eternal fountain of them; yet—hold our souls in life, relieve us from frequent surprisals, and constantly increase our knowledge to the perfect day.

§9. We shall conclude with the following additional observations.

1. Sin is a *wandering* from the way; see chap. iii, 10.

2. No sort of sinners are *excluded* from an interest in the care and love of our compassionate High Priest, but only those who exclude themselves by their unbelief.

3. It was well for us, and enough for us, that the Lord Christ was compassed with the *sinless infirmities* of our nature.

4. God can teach a sanctified use of sinful infirmities; as he did to the priests under the law.

VERSE 3.

And by reason hereof he ought as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

§1. (I.) The words explained. §2. An objection answered. §3. (II.) Observations. 1. The absolute holiness of Christ had a signal influence on the efficacy of his sacrifice, and is a great encouragement to us. §4. 2. Whoever dealth with God or man about the sins of others, should look well in the first place to his own.

§1. (I.) "AND by reason hereof:" the pronoun (*ταυτην*) *this*, plainly and immediately refers to (*αοβειαν, propter hanc, or istam infirmitatem*) "*infirmity*." Had the high priest under the law been without any sinful infirmity, as the Lord Christ was, he should have had nothing to do, but to offer sacrifice for the sins of the people. But it was otherwise with him; (*οφειλει*) *he ought* to suffer for his own sins; the condition wherein he was, as well as the divine appointment, required it. (*Καθως περι το λαον*) "In like manner as for the people," that is, either the whole people collectively, or all the people distributively, as their occasions required. In the *former* way the great anniversary sacrifice, which he celebrated in his own person for the whole body of the people, is principally intended: Lev. xvi, 16, 24: to which we may add the daily sacrifice belonging to the constant service of the temple, which is therefore used synecdochically for the whole worship thereof, Dan. viii, 11, 12. For herein also was the whole church equally concerned.

In the latter way it respects all those occasional sacrifices, whether for sin or trespasses, or free-will offerings, which were continually to be offered by the priests alone, *so for himself*; in like manner, on the same grounds, and for the same reasons, that he offered for the people. He had a common interest with them in their daily sacrifices, which was the public worship of the whole church: and therein he offered sacrifice for himself also, together with the people, because he was encompassed with infirmities, and obnoxious to sin, and so stood in no less need of atonement and expiation than they. Expositors generally and justly agree, that this is peculiar to the high priest according to the law, the Lord Jesus Christ being neither intended nor included in this expression.

§2. There remaineth one difficulty only to be removed, which may arise from the consideration of this discourse, for if the high priest of old, notwithstanding his own sins, could first offer for himself, and then for the people, and so make expiation for all sin, what necessity was there that our High Priest should be absolutely free from all sin, as our apostle declares he was, and that it was necessary he should be? Chap. vii, 25, 26. For it seems, according to this precedent, he might first have offered for his own sin, and then for ours. We reply,

1. It is one thing to expiate sin typically, and another to do it *really*. One thing to do it in representation by virtue of somewhat else, another to do it effectually by itself. The first might be done by them that were sinners, the latter could not.

2. That a real atonement might be made for sin, it was required that our nature, which was to suffer and to be offered, should be united to the divine nature in the

person of the Son of God; but this it could not be, had it not been absolutely sinless.

§3. (II.) *Obs.* 1. The absolute holiness and spotless innocency of Jesus Christ in his offering himself, had a signal influence on the efficacy of his sacrifice, and is a great encouragement to our faith and consolation. Had he any sin of his own he could never have taken all sin from us. From hence it was, that what he did was so acceptable to God, and that what he suffered was justly imputed to us, seeing there was no cause in himself why he should suffer at all, 2 Cor. v, 21, "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The apostle Peter, mentioning the redemption which we have by his blood, in the sacrifice of himself, says it was "as of a lamb without spot and without blemish," 1 Pet. i, 19. And treating again of the same matter, he adds, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," chap. ii, 22.

§4. *Obs.* 2. Whoever dealeth with God or man about the sin of others, should look well in the first place to his own. The high priest was to take care about, and first to offer for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. And they who follow not this method, will miscarry in their work. It is the greatest evidence of hypocrisy for men to be severe toward the sins of others, and careless about their own. By such persons are the souls of men ruined; they undertake the dispensation of the gospel for their conversion to God, and yet know nothing of it themselves. With what confidence, with what conscience can we endeavor this towards others, if we do not first take the highest care of the matter ourselves? Some that should watch over others, are open and profligate sinners themselves. The preaching, exhortations, and re-

proofs of such persons, do but render them the more contemptible, and on many accounts tend to the hardening of those whom they pretend to instruct. And where men regard iniquity in their hearts, although there be no notoriety in their transgressions, they will grow languid and careless in their watch over others: and if they keep up the outward form, it will be a great means of hardening themselves in their own sin. I look on this as one of the greatest blessings of the ministry, that we have *that* enjoined us to do with respect to others, which we neither can, nor will diligently attend to, if we do not first endeavor to have its effects upon ourselves. It behoves us therefore in all things, wherein we may deal with others about sin, to take care of ourselves in the first place, that our consciences may be purged from dead works, while we serve the living God.

VERSE 4.

And no man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

§1. 2. (I.) The words explained. §3. (II.) Observations. 1. It is an act of sovereignty in God to call whom he will to his work, especially to that of honor and dignity in his house. §4. Wherein consists an ordinary call to the ministry. §5. 2. No work for God will warrant our engaging in it, unless we are called thereto.

§1. (I.) **T**HE foregoing verses declare the personal qualifications of high priests; but these alone are not sufficient actually to invest any one with that office; it is required moreover, that he be *lawfully called*. The former makes him *meet* for it, and this gives him his *right* to it. There is no difficulty in rendering these words, and consequently very little difference among translators. The words may be taken as a negative universal proposition, with a particular ex-

ception subjoined. No man taketh this honor to himself; but only he who is called. Or, they may be resolved into two disjunctive propositions; the one universally negative without exception or limitation; no man taketh this honor to himself: the other particularly affirmative, he that is called of God doth receive the honor.

(Οὐκ εαυτῷ τι λαμβανει) "Any one doth not take to himself," that is, *no man doth*. And this verb (λαμβάνω) is not here simply named (*sumo*) to take; but (*assumo*) to take upon, to take to him; or as it sometimes signifies, (*prehendo, corripio*) to take *unduly*, by laying hold of any thing. No man *taketh*, that is, according to the law or divine institution, (τὴν τιμὴν) *the honor*, either the office itself, or the dignity of it, this *honorable office*, without authority from God, such as men would naturally desire, and obtrude themselves into, had not God set bounds to their ambition by his law.

§2. (Αλλὰ ὁ καλεμενος) "But he that is called of God;" he hath, he receiveth the honor of his office. God doth, as it were, look on a person among others, and calls him out to himself, Exod. xxviii, 1.—(Καθὼς καὶ Ἀαρὼν) "Even as Aaron," in like manner as Aaron. The note of similitude is regulated, either by the word called, or by the subject of the instance, Aaron. If by the former, no more is intended but he must have a "call" from God, as Aaron had; but if by the latter, then the "special manner and nature of the call" is limited and determined; he must be called immediately, and in an *extraordinary way*; which last is the sense of the words and place. Our apostle disputes here about the erection of a new priesthood, such as was that of Christ. Herein no ordinary call, no legal constitution, no succession, could take place. Again,

the note of similitude expresseth an agreement in an "extraordinary call," but not in its *manner* and special kind; for that of Christ, as to the manner, was incomparably more excellent and glorious than that of Aaron.

§3. (II.) *Obs.* 1. It is an act of sovereignty in God to call whom he pleaseth to his work and special service, and eminently so, when it is to any place of honor and dignity in his church. The office of priesthood among the Jews was, at the first plantation of the church, the highest and most honorable; and who would not think now but that God would call Moses to this dignity, and so secure also the honor of his posterity after him? But he takes another course, and calls Aaron and his family, leaving Moses and his children after him in the ordinary rank of Levites. By a mere act of sovereign pleasure, God chose him from the many thousands of his brethren. Under the New Testament none was ever called to greater dignity, higher honor, or more eminent employment, than the apostle Paul. Christ takes him in the midst of his persecuting madness and blasphemy, turns his heart to himself, and calls him to be his apostle and honored witness, bearing his name to the ends of the earth. And this he himself mentions, on all occasions, as an effect of sovereign grace and mercy. What merit was there, what previous disposition to their work, in a few fishermen about the lake of Tiberias, or sea of Galilee, that our Lord Jesus Christ should call them to be his apostles, advancing them to twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel?

§4. In his ordinary calls there is the same sovereignty, though somewhat otherwise exercised; for in such a call there are three things:

1. A providential designation of a person to such an office or employment. When any office in the House of God, suppose that of the ministry, is fixed and established, the first thing that God doth in the call of any one to it, is the providential disposition of the circumstances of his life, directing his thoughts and designs toward such an end.

2. It is a part of this call of God, when he blesseth and prospereth the endeavors of men to prepare themselves with those previous dispositions and qualifications as are necessary to the actual susception of this office. Such as an inclination of their hearts in compliance with his designation: an especial blessing of their endeavors for the due improvement of their natural faculties and abilities in study and learning; the communication of peculiar gifts, rendering them able to discharge the duty of their office; and an outward call according to rule, for admission into the church: in all which God acts according to his own will and pleasure. Hence we should cultivate an awful reverence of God, and an holy readiness to comply with his call, and not run away from it, as did Jonah, chap. i. Nor be weary of it because of difficulty and opposition, as at sundry times it was ready to befall Jeremiah, chap. xv, 10, chap. xx, 7—9, much less desert it on any earthly account whatever; seeing that he who sets his hand to this plough and takes it back again, is unworthy of the kingdom of heaven; and it is certain that he who deserts his calling on wordly accounts, first took it up on no other. We may also learn hence, not to envy one another, on account of whatever God is pleased to call any to.

§5. We may further observe—The highest excellency and utmost necessity of any work to be done for God in this world, will not warrant our engaging

in it, unless we are *called* thereto. Yea,—The more excellent any work of God is, the more express ought our call to be. And,—It is a great dignity and honor to be duly called to any service, or office, in the house of God.

VERSE 5.

So also Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high priest; but He that said to him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

§1.—2. (I.) Explanation of the words. §2. (II.) Observations. 1. The office of a high priest over the house of God, was an honor and glory to Jesus Christ. §2. 2. Election and love are the cause of God's committing all authority over the church to Jesus Christ.

§1. (I.) **T**HE description of an high priest according to the law, with respect to his nature and employment, ver. 1, his qualifications, ver. 2, his special duty with regard to himself and others, ver. 3, and his call, ver. 4, being completed, we have in *this verse* an application of the whole to our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Οὕτω καὶ) "*so also,*" and *so*, or, in like manner, referring to the last express instance of a *call* to office. As *they* were called of God, "*so,*" or in like manner, was "*Christ also.*" This is primarily regarded, though respect may be had to it in all the particular instances of analogy and similitude which follow.

Christ is an high priest. Had he been of the tribe of Levi, and of the family of Aaron, he would have been so acknowledged by all; but how he should become so who was a stranger to that family, who sprang of the tribe of Judah (concerning which Moses spake nothing of the priesthood) might be highly questioned. Fully to remove the whole difficulty, the apostle in the preceding verse lays down a concession in an uni-

verbal maxim, that none—who had not a right thereto by virtue of an antecedent constitution, which Christ had not, as not being of the tribe of Levi—could be a priest, without an immediate call from God, such as Aaron had, and therein acknowledgeth, that if he were not extraordinarily called of God, he could be no high priest.

§2. "He glorified not himself to be made an high priest." Outward call by men, or in virtue of a divine legal ordinance he had none; if, therefore, he be a priest he must be made so by God. Hence the *Socinians* (joining with the *Jews*) vainly raise a cavil against the deity of Christ. If he were God, say they, why did *another* glorify him? why did he not glorify *himself*? There were, indeed, some force in the objection against us, if we held that the Lord Messiah were *God only*. But our doctrine concerning his *person* is that which is declared by our apostle, Phil. ii, 6—8, "Being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was in the likeness of men." But although he was perfectly and completely constituted an high priest, by the acts of God the Father (which we need not here repeat) yet his solemn consecration and dedication, not to his office, but to the *actual discharge* of it, were effected by acts of his own, in his preparation for, and actual offering up himself a sacrifice once for all. And so he was perfected and consecrated by his own blood. Wherefore he did not glorify himself to be "*made* an high priest," that was an act of the will and authority of God. But how is it said that Christ "*glorified* not himself?" Was there an *addition* of glory or honor made to him thereby? Nay, doth not the scripture every where declare this as an act of the highest con-

descension in him? How, therefore, can he be said not to glorify himself therein? Let those answer this inquiry, who deny his *divine* nature and being. They will find themselves in the same condition as the Pharisees, when our Savior posed them with a question to the same purpose, viz. how David came to call Christ his Lord, who was to be his son so long after? To us these things are clear and evident; for if we consider the divine nature of Christ, it was an infinite condescension in him to take our nature, and therein to execute the office of a priest for us; yet with respect to the nature assumed, the office itself was an honor and dignity to him.

§3. "But he that said unto him." There is an ellipsis in the words, which must be supplied to complete the antithesis; "but he *glorified him* who said, &c."

It is not easily apprehended how the apostle confirmeth the priesthood of Christ, or his call to office by these words: they are twice used elsewhere by himself to *other* ends, Heb. i, 5, Acts xiii, 33, for these originally signify the *eternal relation* that subsists between the Father and the Son. Various have been the opinions of interpreters about the precise import of this testimony; but not to recount them, we may observe towards ascertaining the true sense, that it is not the *priesthood* of Christ, but his *call* to it, which the apostle asserts;—and that he intends to shew only that it was God the Father, from whom he had all his *mediatory* power, as king, priest, and prophet to his church. And,—this is evidently proved by the testimony, in that God declares him to be *his Son*, and *accepts* of him in the discharge of his commission. For this solemn declaration of his *relation* to God the Father in his eternal sonship, and the Father's *approbation* of him, prove that he undertook nothing, but

what he was designed for; which designation is more particularly declared in the ensuing testimony.

§4. *Obs.* 1. The office of the high priesthood over the church of God was an honor and glory to Jesus Christ. There was a glory upon him from the nature of the work itself; so it was prophesied, Zech. vi, 13, "He shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear the glory." The work was no less than the "healing of the breach" made between God and the whole creation by the first apostasy. Sin had put variance between God and all his creatures, Gen. iii, Rom. viii, 20. No way was left (without this wondrous plan) but that God must be perpetually dishonored, or all creatures everlastingly cursed. How great, how glorious a work must it needs be, to put a stop to this entrance of confusion; to lay hold on the perishing creation, running headlong into eternal ruin, and to preserve it, or at least some portion, some first fruits of it, from destruction? Herein then was the Lord Jesus Christ exceedingly glorious in his priestly office, because in the discharge of it he was the only means of restoring the eclipsed glory of Jehovah, and of more advantageously displaying its adorable lustre; the greatness of which work no heart can conceive. Moreover, he has a glory with which he is delighted, that all his saints, in all parts of the world, do severally and in their assemblies, with all humility, love, and thankfulness, worship, bless, praise, and glorify him, as the author and finisher of their recovery to God, and eternal salvation. Every day do they come about his throne, cleave to him, and live in the admiration of his love and power. And this glory will be full at the *latter day*, and will so hold to all eternity, when all his saints from the beginning to the end of the world shall be gathered to him, and shall abide with him.

adoring him as their head, and shouting for joy while they behold his glory. For these and the like reasons it was that our blessed Savior, knowing how unable we are in this world to comprehend his glory, as also how great a part of our blessedness consists in the knowledge of it, makes that great request for us, that, after we are carried through our course of this transitory life, we may, as a principal part of our rest and reward, "be with him where he is, *to behold his glory*," John xviii, 24.

§5. *Obs. 2. Relation and love are the fountain and cause of God committing all authority over the church to Jesus Christ.* By this expression of relation and love, "thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," doth the apostle prove that God called him to be the High Priest of the church. To the same purpose himself speaketh, John iii, 35, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." And this relation to God manifested itself in all he did in the discharge of his office; for, saith the evangelist, "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John i, 14. Now the relation intended is, that one single eternal relation of his being the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father. And as God declares the greatness of this work which none could effect but his Son, he who was God with himself, John i, 1, 2; so it is the will of God "that all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father," John v, 23. The "*love*" intended is twofold; the *natural* and eternal love of the Father to the Son, and his delight in him, as participant of the *same nature* with himself,—and his *actual love* towards him, on account of his infinite *condescension* and grace, in undertaking this work, wherein his glory was so eminently concerned, see Phil. ii, 6—11.

VERSE 6.

As he saith also in another place, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.

§1. The connexion of the words. §2. The manner of introducing this testimony. §3. The testimony itself. §4. The manner of Christ's call compared with that of Aaron. §5. Observation.

§1. **T**HIS verse gives us a farther confirmation of the call of Christ to his office, by another testimony taken from Psal. cx, 4. And that the whole psalm was prophetic of Jesus Christ, I have proved before, against the exception of the Jews, both in our exertations and exposition on the first chapter. The subject matter also spoken of, or the priesthood of Melchisedec, with the "order" thereof, the apostle expressly resumes and handles at large, chap. vii, where it must be considered. There is, therefore, only one thing here to be inquired into, viz. how far, or wherein they give testimony to the assertion—that "Christ did not glorify himself to be made an high priest, but that he was designed thereto of God even the Father." There are two things in the words: (1.) The *manner* of the introduction of this new testimony. (2.) The *testimony* itself.

§2. The *first*; "as he saith in another:" (*καθως και*) *in the same manner*, as he had said in Psal. ii, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." So great and important a truth had need of solemn confirmation. The thing signified is principally here intended; and (*λεγει*) *he saith*, refers immediately to God the Father himself. That which the apostle designed to prove, is, that Christ was called and constituted an high priest by the authority of God the Father, by his

immediate speaking to him. The Holy Ghost by the mouth of *David* speaks these things to us, but he doth only therein declare, what the Father said to the Son; and that was it which the apostle intended to prove. "He (God) saith (*εν ελεφα*) in another," that is (*ψαλμω*) *psalm*, Psal. cx.

§3. . *Secondly*, the *testimony itself*, or the words of the Father to the Son, whereby the apostle's assertion is confirmed; "thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." It was sufficient for the apostle at present to produce these *words only*; but he will elsewhere make use of the *manner how* they were uttered, with the "oath of God," as in the psalm; "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest," &c. And these words of verse 4th in the psalm, indissolubly depend on the first verse; "The Lord said unto my Lord;" that is, God the Father said to the Son, with respect to his incarnation and mediation. And this word "*thou art*," is (*verbum constitutivum*) a "constituting word," wherein the priesthood of Christ was founded. And it may be considered, (1.) As declarative of God's eternal decree, with the covenant between Father and Son, whereby he was designed to this office; as demonstrative of his mission to the discharge of his office; including also a supposition that God would prepare a body for him, wherein he might exercise his priesthood, and which he might offer to him. On the whole, it is undeniable from this testimony, that God called and appointed him to be a priest, which was to be proved.

§4. Thus Christ was called of God as was Aaron; that is, immediately, and in an *extraordinary* manner, which was necessary in the first erection of that office. But yet, as to the special manner of his call, it was every way more excellent and glorious than that of

Aaron. There was no need of any outward ceremony to express it; it consisted in the *words* of God spoken immediately to himself; which being present, effective, authoritative, and not merely declarative of what God would do—by them was he called and made priest, and they are expressive of infinite love and acquiescence. “*Thou art my Son, thou art a priest for ever.*” They were spoken also with the solemnity of an oath, “the Lord hath sworn.” He was not, therefore, only called of God, as was Aaron, but also in a way far *more eminent* and glorious.

§5. We may hence *observe*; that in all things wherein God hath to do with mankind, Jesus Christ should have an absolute pre-eminence. It was necessary that some things should be made use of to reveal and exhibit him, which must, as appointments of God, and effects of his wisdom, be precious and excellent. But yet, it is in his *person*, that he hath the transcendent pre-eminence; because, there was in all the typical prefigurations a natural imperfection, so that they could not perfectly represent him. So Aaron was called in an extraordinary manner, to prefigure his call to his priesthood; but that call was accompanied with much weakness and imperfection. The principal dignity of all these representations depended on their respect and relation to him, which exalts him infinitely above them. And so also is it with all the *means of grace*, whereby at present he is exhibited, and the benefits of his mediation communicated to us.

VERSE 7.

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.

§1. Connexion of the words. §2. (I.) The first qualification of Christ as a high priest, his temporary infirmity. §3. (II.) What he did in this capacity. The act of his oblation. §4. The matter of it. §5, 6. The manner of it. §7. Its object. §8. General causes. §9. The true frame of his soul. §10. Its effects. §11. Limitations of those effects. §12. Christ's prayers. §13. His being heard. §14—21. (III.) Observations.

§1. **I**N this verse, two instances of the *qualifications* of an high priest are accommodated to our Lord Jesus Christ, and that in the retrograde order before proposed; *first*, an high priest according to the law "was compassed with infirmities," ver. 3, which is here applied to Christ, even from the time he *entered* upon the discharge of his office, "the days of his flesh;" *secondly*, the *acting* of the high priest, as so qualified, is accommodated to him. For an high priest was appointed "that he might offer gifts and sacrifices for sins;" and so here it is affirmed of our Savior, that he also "offered" to God; which is expressive of a sacerdotal act.

§2. (I.) Wherein consists the qualifications of Christ here first mentioned? "Who in the days of his flesh." (ὅς) *Who*, that is (χριστός) *Christ*, mentioned ver. 4, to whose priesthood thenceforward testimony is given. *In the days of his flesh.* We may here inquire, what is meant by the *flesh* of Christ? And—what were the *days* of his flesh?

First, the *flesh* of Christ is taken two ways, for his whole human nature, John i, 14, "The word was made *flesh*;" 1 Tim. iii, 16, "God was manifest in the *flesh*;" Rom. ix, 5, "Of whom was Christ according to the *flesh*;" Heb. ii, 9, 10, "He partook of *flesh* and

blood, &c.” *In the flesh*, in this sense, as to the substance of it, Christ still continues. The body wherein he suffered and rose from the dead, was altered upon his resurrection and ascension, as to its qualities, but not as to its substance; it consisted still of flesh and bones, Luke xxiv, 39. “This *flesh*” he carried entire with him into heaven, where he still continues, though exalted and glorified beyond our apprehension, Acts i, 11. And in this flesh shall he come again to judgment. For the union of this “flesh” with the divine nature in the person of the Son of God is eternally indissoluble. And they overthrow the foundation of faith, who fancy that the Lord Christ hath *another* body in heaven than what he had on the earth; as they (the *Papists*) also do make him to have such “flesh” as they can eat every day. It is not therefore the flesh of Christ in this sense, as absolutely considered, which is here intended. Again,

“*Flesh*,” as applied to Christ, signifies the frailties, weaknesses, and infirmities of our nature; or our nature as it is weak and infirm, during this mortal life. So is the word often used, Psal. lxxviii, 39, “He remembereth that they are but (בשר) *“flesh;”* that is, poor, weak, mortal creatures. Psal. lxx, 2, “Unto thee shall all *flesh* come;” poor, helpless creatures, standing in need of divine assistance. So flesh and blood is taken for that *principle of corruption* which must be done away before we enter into heaven, 1 Cor. xv, 50. And that is meant by the flesh of Christ in this place; he was “compassed with infirmities.”

Secondly, what were the “*days*” of his flesh intended? It is evident, that in general his whole course and walk in this world may be comprised herein. From his cradle to his grave he bare all the infirmities of our nature, with all the dolorous and grievous effects of

them. But the season peculiarly intended is the *close* of those days, in his *last sufferings*, when all his sorrows, trials, and temptations came to an head. The sole design of this expression is to shew that when he offered up his sacrifice, he was compassed with infirmities, which hath an especial influence on our faith and consolation.

§3. (II.) An account is given of *what he did* in these "days of his flesh;" which in general, was his acting as a priest, as,

First; the act of his oblation, (προσευχας) *who offered*. The word (προσΦερω, *accedo, appropinquo, or accedere facio*) when applied to persons or things in common, is to *approach*, to *draw near*. But when applied to things *sacred* (like קרב) it signifies (*offero*) to *offer*. And although it be sometimes used in the New Testament, in the common sense before mentioned, yet it alone, and no other, is made use of to express an access with gifts and sacrifices, or offering on the altar. Hence it is manifest, that a sacerdotal offering is here intended: he offered as a priest.

§4. *Secondly*; The *matter* of his offering is expressed by (δεησεις και ικετηριας) "prayers and supplications." Both these words have the same general signification; and they also agree in this, that they respect an especial kind of prayer, which is for averting of impending evils, or such as are deserved or justly feared. The first term, (δεησεις, *preces deprecatoriæ*) we properly render *supplications*, 1 Tim. ii, 1. And *supplicationes* are the same with *supplicia*; which term signifies both *punishments* and *prayers* for the averting of them, as in the Hebrew, the same word (חטאה) is both *sin* and a *sacrifice* for the expiation of it.

The other term (*κέληρια*) is no where used in the scripture but in this place. In other authors it originally signifies a *bough*, or *olive branch*, wrapped about with wool or baize, or something of the like nature, which they carried in their hands, and lifted up, who were supplicants to others for obtaining peace, or averting their displeasure. Hence is the phrase (*velamenta pretendere*) to *hold forth* such *covered branches*. HERODIAN calls them (*κέληριας θαλλας*) “branches of supplication.” Hence the word came to denote a supplicatory prayer. And this sense singularly suits the scope of the place; as having respect to the *sufferings* of Christ, and the fear which befell him in the apprehension of them, as they were *penal*.

But it must also be here farther observed, that whenever this last mentioned term is used in heathen authors, with respect to their gods, it was always accompanied with an *expiatory sacrifice*; or was the peculiar name of those prayers and supplications which they made with those sacrifices. And the Jewish high priest was appointed in the great sacrifice of expiation, to *confess*, over the head of the scape-goat, “all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions,” Levit. xvi, 21; which he did not without prayers for the expiation of them, and deliverance from the curse of the law due to them. And they are not the *mere supplications* of our blessed Savior that are here intended, but as they accompanied and were a necessary adjunct of the *offering* up of himself, his soul and body, a real and propitiatory sacrifice to God. And therefore wherever our apostle elsewhere speaks of the offering of Christ, he calls it the offering of himself, or of his body, Ephes. x, 2; Heb. ix, 14, 25, 28; chap. x, 10. Here therefore he expresseth the *whole sacrifice* of Christ by the “prayers and supplications”

wherewith it was accompanied. And he describes the sacrifice or offering of Christ by this adjunct, for the following reasons:

1. To evince what he before declared, that in the days of his flesh, when he offered up himself to God, he was encompassed with the *weakness* of our nature, which made "prayers and supplications" necessary for him; when he cried "from the lion's mouth," and "the horns of unicorns," Psalm xxii, 21. He was in earnest, and pressed to the utmost, in the work that lay before him.

2. That we might seriously consider *how great* a work it was to expiate sin. As it was not to be done without suffering, so a *bare* suffering would not effect it. Not only death, and a bloody death, was required, but such as was to be accompanied with "prayers and supplications." The redemption of souls was precious, and must have ceased for ever, had not every thing been set on work which is acceptable and prevalent with God. And,

3. To shew that the Lord Christ had now made this business his *own*; he had taken the whole work, and the whole debt of sin upon *himself*. He was now therefore to manage it, as if *he alone* was the person concerned. And this rendered his "prayers and supplications" necessary to his sacrifice. And,

4. That we might be instructed *how to plead, and make use* of his sacrifice in our stead. If it was not, if it could not, be offered by him but with prayers and supplications, and those for the averting divine wrath, and making peace with God, we may not think to be interested therein whilst under the power of lazy and slothful unbelief. Let him that would go to Christ, consider well how Christ went to God for him; which is yet farther declared,

§5. *Thirdly*, In the manner of his offering these prayers and supplications, whereby he offered up himself also unto God. He did it (*μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς*) *with strong crying, or a strong cry, and tears*. To acquaint ourselves fully with what is here intended, we may consider—both how it was expressed in *prophecy*;—and how it is related in his *history*, as explanatory of what is reported here by our apostle.

In *prophecy*, the supplications here intended are called his “roaring,” Psalm xxii, 1, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Why art thou so far from helping me, and from (*רִבְרִי שִׁמְאוֹתִי*) “the words of my roaring?” *Rugius*, the proper cry of a lion is (*κραυγῇ ἰσχυρᾷ*, *clamor validus*) “a strong and vehement outcry.” And it is used to express such a vehemency in supplications, as cannot be compressed, but will ordinarily break out into fervent outcries, Psalm xxx, 8, “When I kept silence,” that is, whilst he was under his perplexities from the guilt of sin, before he came to a full and clear acknowledgment of it, as verse 5, “my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.” The vehemency of his complainings consumed his natural strength. It is not merely the outward noise, but the inward earnest intenseness and engagedness of heart and soul, with the greatness and depth of the occasion, that is principally intended.

§6. We may consider the same matter as related by the *evangelists*. The “prayers” intended are those which he offered to God during his passion, both in the garden, and on the cross. The first are declared, Luke xxii, 44, “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as drops of blood falling on the earth.” The inward frame is here declared, which our apostle shadows out by the external expressions and signs of it, “in strong cries and tears.”

He prayed (*ἐκλευσότερον*) "with more vehement intention" of mind and body. For the word denotes not a degree of the actings of grace in Christ, as some have imagined, but the highest degree of earnestness in the acting of his mind and body, another token of that wonderful conflict wherein he was engaged, which no heart can conceive. This produced that preternatural sweat, wherein (*δρομβοι αιματος*) *thick drops of blood* ran from him to the ground. See Psa. xxii, 4. Some would place the cause of this agony, in those previous *apprehensions* he had of the corporal sufferings which were to come upon him. Where then is the glory of his spiritual strength and fortitude? Where the *beauty* of the example he set before us? His outward sufferings were indeed grievous; but yet considered *merely* as such, they were beneath what sundry of his martyrs have been called to undergo for his name's sake. And yet we know that many, yea, through the power of his grace, most of them in all ages, have cheerfully, joyfully, and without the least consternation of spirit, undergone the most exquisite tortures. And shall we imagine that the Son of God, who had advantages for his support and consolation infinitely above what they had, should be given up to this tremendous conflict, wherein his whole nature was almost dissolved, out of a *mere apprehension* of those corporal sufferings which were coming on him? Were *these* what deprived his mind of refreshments and consolations? God forbid, that we should have such mean thoughts of what he was, of what he did, of what he suffered. There were *other* causes of these things, as we shall see immediately. Again; on the cross itself it is said, (*ανεβοησεν φωνη μεγαλη*, Matt. xxvii, 46,) "he cried with a loud voice;" that is, plainly, "he prayed (*μετα κραυγης ισχυρας*) *with a great outcry*," or loud voice with a strong

cry. This was the manner of the sacerdotal prayers of Christ, with respect to his *oblation*; but the other part which expressed his *intercession*, as founded on his offering, he performed with all calmness and sedateness of mind, with all assurance and joyful glory, as if he were actually already in heaven, John xvii. If therefore we compare the 22d Psalm, as explained by the evangelist and our apostle, with the 17th of John, we shall find the abovementioned double sacerdotal prayer of our Savior in behalf of the whole church, pointed out in the clearest manner. He offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and "*tears*." His "*tears*," indeed, are not expressly mentioned in the sacred story; but *weeping* was one of those infirmities of our nature which he was subject to, John xi, 35, "Jesus wept." • He expressed his sorrow thereby: and now being in the greatest distress and sorrow that reached to the soul, we may well judge that he poured out tears with his prayers, as here directly mentioned. So did he here offer up himself through the eternal Spirit.

§7. *Fourthly.* The *object* of this offering of Christ: he to whom he offered up prayers and supplications, was, "He that was able to save him from death;" that is, God. "To him who was *able*." Ability or power is either natural or moral: *natural* power is strength and active efficiency; in God, *omnipotency*. *Moral* power is right and authority; in God, absolute *sovereignty*. And the Lord Christ hath respect to the ability or power of God in *both* these senses; in the former, as that which he relied upon for deliverance; in the latter, as that to which he submitted himself. The former was the object of his *faith*, that God by the greatness of his power could support and deliver him. The latter was the object of his *fear*, as to the

dreadful work which he had undertaken. Now because our apostle is upon the description of that frame of heart, and those actings of soul, wherewith our High Priest offered himself for us to God, which was with prayers and supplications, accompanied with strong cries and tears; I shall consider from these words three things:

First, What were the *general causes* of the state and condition wherein Christ is described by our apostle, and of the actings ascribed to him therein.

Secondly, What were the *immediate effects* of the sufferings of our Lord in his own soul.

Thirdly, What *limitations* are to be assigned to them.

§8. *First. The general causes* of this wonderful state and condition.

He considered *God* at that instant as the *Supreme Rector* and Judge of all, the author of the law, and its avenger; who had power of *life* and *death*, as the one was to be destroyed and the other inflicted according to the law. He now considered God as actually putting the law in execution, having absolute power and authority to give up to the sting of it, or to save therefrom. God represented himself to him first, as attended with infinite holiness, righteousness, and severity, as one that would not pass by sin, nor acquit the guilty; and then as accompanied with supreme or sovereign authority over him, the law, life, and death. He considered *death*, not naturally as a separation of soul and body, nor yet merely as a *painful* separation; but he looked on it as the curse of the law, due to sin, inflicted by God as a just and righteous judge. Hence he himself is said to be made a curse, Gal. iii, 13. This curse was now coming on him as the sponsor or surety of the new covenant. For although he considered

himself, and the effect of things upon himself, yet he offered up these prayers as *our Sponsor*, that the work of mediation which he had undertaken might have a good and blessed issue.

§9. From hence we may take a view of that *frame of soul* which our Lord Jesus Christ was in when he offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears, considering God as he who had authority over the law, and the sentence of it that was about to be inflicted on him. Some have thought that upon the confidence of the *indissolubleness* of his person, and the actual *assurance*, which they suppose he always had of the love of God, his sufferings could have no effect of *fear, sorrow, trouble, or perplexity*, on his soul, but only what respected the natural enduring of pain and shame, which he was exposed to. But the scripture gives us another account of these things; it informs us, that "he began to be afraid, and sore amazed," that "his soul was heavy and sorrowful to death," that he was in an agony, and afterwards cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" under a sense of divine dereliction. There was indeed a mighty acting of love in God towards us in giving up his Son to death for us; and there were always in him, a great love to the *person of his Son*, and an ineffable complacency in his *mediatorial obedience*, especially that which he exercised in his sufferings. But yet the curse and punishment which he underwent, was an effect of vindictive justice, as such did he look upon it; whatever was due to us from the justice of God, and sentence of the law, he underwent and suffered, which was the cause of the state and condition of Christ here described.

§10. *Secondly*. The *effects* of his sufferings in himself may be reduced to these two kinds:

1. His *dereliction*. He was under a suspension of the comforting influences of his relation to God. Hence was a part of that cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And from hence, he was filled with "heaviness and sorrow." He says of himself, that his "soul was exceeding sorrowful even to death;" Matt. xxvi, 38, which expressions declare a sorrow that is absolutely inexpressible. And this sorrow was the effect of his penal desertion; for sorrow was the life of the curse. And this dereliction proceeded hence, in that, all communications from the divine nature to the human, beyond subsistence, were *voluntary*.

2. He had an intimate sense of the *wrath and displeasure* of God against the sin that was then imputed to him. All ~~our~~ sins were then caused, by an act of divine and supreme authority, to meet on him; or "God laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii, 6. Even all our guilt was imputed to him, or none of the punishment due to our sins could have been justly inflicted on him. In this state of things—in that great hour, and wonderful transaction of divine wisdom, grace, and righteousness, whereon the glory of God, the recovery of fallen man, with the utter condemnation of Satan, depended—God was pleased for a while—to hold the *scales of justice* in an equipoise; that the turning of them might be more conspicuous and glorious. In the one scale, as it were, there was the weight of the first sin and apostasy from God, with all its consequents, covered with the sentence of the law, and the curse of vindictive justice; a weight that all the angels in heaven could not stand under one moment:—In the other, were the obedience, holiness, righteousness, and *penal sufferings* of the Son of God, all having weight and worth from the infinite

dignity and worthiness of his divine person. Infinite justice kept these things for a season at a poise, until the Son of God, as our Great High Priest, by "his prayers, tears, and supplications" prevailed.

§11. *Thirdly*, As to the limitations of the effects of Christ's sufferings with respect to himself, we may conclude in general; (1.) That they were such only as were consistent with absolute purity, holiness, and freedom from the least appearance of sin. (2.) Not such as did in the least impeach the *glorious union* of his natures in the same person: nor (3.) Such as took off from the dignity of his obedience, and the merit of his sufferings; but were all necessary thereto. But then (4.) as he underwent whatever is grievous, dolorous, and afflictive, and penal in the wrath of God, and sentence of the law executed; so these things really wrought in him *sorrow, amazement, anguish, fear, dread*, with the like *penal effects* of the pains of hell; from which cause it was that he offered up "prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears, to him that was able to save him from death;" the event of which is described in the last clause of the verse.

§12. "And was heard in that which he feared." To be heard in scripture signifies either to be accepted in our requests—or to be answered in them. In the first way there is no doubt but the Father heard the Son always, John xi, 42. But our inquiry is here, how far the Lord Christ was heard in the latter way, so heard as to be delivered from what he prayed against. Concerning this observe, that the prayers of Christ in this matter were of two sorts:

1. *Conditional*; Such was that prayer for the passing of the cup from him, Luke xxii, 42, "Father, if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me." Christ could not have been a man and not have an extreme aver-

sion to the things that were coming upon him. Nothing is suffering, nor can be *penal* to us, but what is grievous to our nature; but his mind was fortified against the dread and terror of nature, so as to come to a perfect composure in the will of God: "nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." He was heard herein, so far as he desired to be heard. For although he could not but desire deliverance from the whole as he was a man; yet he desired it not absolutely; he was wholly subjected to the will of God.

2. *Absolute*; The chief and principal supplications that he offered up to him who was able to save him from death were absolute, and in them he was absolutely heard and delivered. For upon the presentation of death to him, as attended with the wrath and curse of God, he had deep and dreadful apprehensions of it; and he well knew how unable the human nature was to undergo it, and prevail against it, if not mightily supported and carried through by the power of God. In this condition, it was part of his obedience, it was his duty to pray, that he might be delivered from the absolute prevalency of it, that he might not be cast in his trial, that he might not be confounded nor condemned. This he hoped and believed, and therefore prayed absolutely for it, Isa. i, 7, 8, and he was absolutely heard. For it is said;

§18. "He was heard (*απο της ευλαβειας*) *from his fear*." The word here used is in a singular construction of speech, and is itself of various significations. Sometimes it is used for a religious reverence; but such as hath the fear of evil joined with it; Frequently it signifies fear itself, such as is accompanied with a reverential care, and holy circumspection. The adjective (*ευλαβης*) every where denotes a religious fear, chap. xi, 7. We render the verb in its participial

form, (εὐλαβήσεις) by *moved with fear*; that is, a reverence of God mixed with a dreadful apprehension of an approaching judgment. And the use of the preposition (από) *from*, added to (εἰσακουσθεῖς) *heard*, is also singular; (auditus ex metu) "*heard from his fear*." Therefore is this passage so variously interpreted. Some read it, he was heard "because of his reverence," or reverential obedience to God. Some would have the reverence intended to relate to God; the reverential respect that God had to him; God heard him "from the holy respect" he had for him. But these things are fond, and suit not the design of the place. Others render it, (prometu) "*out of fear*." And because heard "from fear," is an expression somewhat harsh, they explain (auditus) "*heard*" by (liberatus) "*delivered*" from fear; and this is not improper: So GROTIVS; *Cum mortem vehementer perhorrescere, id hoc ex auditu fuit ut ab isto metu liberaretur*. In this sense fear internal and subjective is intended; God relieved him against his fear, removing it by strengthening and comforting him. Others by fear intend the *thing feared*, which sense our translators follow. He was "*heard*," that is, "*delivered from the things which he feared as coming upon him*." And to deny that the soul of Christ was engaged in an ineffable conflict with the wrath of God, that his faith and trust in God were tried to the utmost by the opposition made to them, by fear, dread, and a terrible apprehension of Divine displeasure due to our sins, is to renounce the benefit of his passion, and to turn the whole of it into an empty show.

§14. (III.) It remains that we consider the observations which these words afford us for instruction, wherein also their sense and import will be farther explained.

Obs. 1. The Lord Jesus Christ himself had a time of infirmity in this world. It is true, his infirmities were all sinless, but all troublesome and grievous. By them he was exposed to all sorts of temptations and sufferings, which are the two springs of all that is evil and dolorous to our nature. And thus it was with him, not for a few days, or a short season only, but during his whole course in this world. This the story of the gospel gives us an account of, and the instance of "his offering up prayers with strong cries and tears," puts out of all question. These things were real, and not acted to make a mere representation of them. And of this he himself testifies, Psalm xxii, 6, 7, "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all that see me laugh me to scorn." How can the infirmities of our nature, and a sense of them, be more emphatically expressed? So, Psalm lxxix, 20, "Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." Let us not then think it strange, if we have our season of weakness and infirmity in this world; whereby we are exposed to temptation and suffering. Apt we are to complain; the whole nation of professors is full of complaints; one is in want, straits, and poverty; another in pain and a variety of troubles; some are in distress on account of their relations; some are persecuted, some are tempted, some are pressed with private, some with public concerns; some sick, and some weak, and some are fallen asleep. And these things are apt to make us faint, to despond, and be weary. I know not how others bear up their hearts and spirits; for my part, I have much ado to keep from continual longing after the embraces of the dust and shades of the grave, as a curtain drawn between us and everlasting rest.

In the mean time, every momentary gourd that interposeth a little between us and the wind and sun, is too much valued by us. But what would we have? Do we consider *what* and *where* we are, when we think strange of these things? These are the "days of our flesh," wherein these things are both due to us, and unavoidable; "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," Job v, 7. Our only relief in this condition, is, a due regard to our *great Example*; what he did, how he behaved himself in "the days of his flesh," when he had more difficulties and miseries to conflict with than we all. His patience was immovable in all; "he did not cry (with a murmuring discontent,) nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets," Isa. xlii, 2. Whatever befell him he bore it quietly and patiently. Being buffeted, he threatened not; being reviled, he reviled not again. As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. The whole life of Christ was a life of submission and trust in God. To this he added earnest *fervent prayers and supplications*.

§15. *Obs. 2.* A life of glory may ensue after a life of infirmity. If, saith our apostle, we have hope in *this life only*, then we are of all men the most miserable. For besides, that we are obnoxious to the same common infirmities within, and calamities without with all other men, there is always a peculiar sort of distress that they are exposed to who live godly in Christ Jesus. But there is nothing can befall us, (unbelief excepted) but what may issue in eternal glory.

§16. *Obs. 3.* The Lord Christ is no more now in a state of weakness and temptations; the "days of his flesh" are past and gone; Rev, i, 18, "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." The state of infirmity and weakness, wherein

he was obnoxious to death, is now past, and he "lives for evermore." Henceforth he dieth no more, death hath no more power over him; nor any thing else that can give him the least trouble. With his *death* ended "the days of his flesh." His revival, or return to life, was into absolute, eternal, unchangeable glory. He is indeed still hated as much as ever, *maligned* as much as in the days of his flesh; and in his concerns on earth, exposed to the utmost power of hell and the world. But he laughs all his enemies to scorn, he hath them in derision, and in the midst of their wise counsels, and mighty designs, disposes of them, and all their undertakings, to *his own* ends and purposes, not theirs: he is pleased indeed as yet to suffer, and to be persecuted in his *saints* and servants, but that is from a gracious condescension, by virtue of a spiritual union, not from any necessity of state or condition. And some may hence learn how to *fear* him, as others to *put their trust* in him.

§17. *Obs. 4.* The Lord Christ filled up every season with the proper duty of it. The "days of his flesh" were the *only* season wherein he could offer to God, which he accordingly did. Some would not have Christ offer himself until he came to heaven; but *then* the season of offering was *past*. Christ was to use no "strong cries and tears" in heaven, which yet were necessary concomitants of his oblation. Then only was his body capable of pain, his soul of sorrow, his nature of dissolution, all which were necessary to this duty. Then was he in a condition wherein faith, and trust, and prayers, and tears, were as necessary to himself as to the perfection of his offering.

§18. *Obs. 5.* The Lord Jesus Christ, in offering himself for us, labored and travailed in soul to bring the work to a good issue. An hard labor it was, he

went through it with fears, sorrows, tears, outcries, prayers, and humble supplications. This is called (*וְעָבַד לַיָּוֶן*) the pressing, weary, laborious *travail* of his soul, Isa. liii, 11. He labored, was straitened, and pained to bring forth his glorious birth. Let us take a little prospect of this travail of the Redeemer's soul.

1. All the holy *natural affections* of his soul were filled and extended to the utmost capacity, in acting and suffering. The travail of our souls lies much in the engagement and actings of our affections. Who is there that hath been acquainted with great *fears*, great *sorrows*, great *desires*, &c. who knows it not? These had now their sails filled in Christ, and that about the highest, noblest, most glorious objects that they are capable of.

2. All his *graces*, the gracious qualifications of his mind and affections, were in like manner in the height of their exercise. Both those whose immediate object was God himself, and those which respected the church, were all of them excited and engaged. As *faith and trust in God*; for he was to give an instance of the excellency of *faith*, rising above the instance of provocation there was in the unbelief of our first parents, whereby they fell from God. *Love to mankind*; as this in his divine nature was the peculiar spring of that infinite condescension whereby he took our nature on him for the work of mediation, Phil. ii, 6, 8, so it wrought mightily and effectually in his human nature in the whole course of his obedience, but especially in his offering himself to God for us. Hence where there is mention made of his "giving himself for us," which was in the sacrifice of himself, commonly the cause of it is expressed to have been his *love*. The Son of God "*loved me*, and gave himself for me," Gal.

ii, 20. "Christ *loved* the church, and gave himself for it," Ephes. v, 25, 26. "He *loved* us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," Rev. i, 5. With *this love* his soul now travailed, and labored to bring forth the blessed fruits of it. The workings of this love in the heart of Christ, during his great trial, whereby he balanced the sorrow and distress of his sufferings, no tongue can express, no heart can conceive. *Zeal for the glory of God*; zeal is the height of careful, solicitous love. The love of Christ was great to the souls of men; but the *life* of it lay in his love to God and zeal for his glory. This he now labored in, that God might be glorified in the salvation of the elect. This was committed to him, and concerning this he took care that it might not miscarry. The highest exercise of *obedience to God*: it is observed as the height of his condescension, that "he was *obedient* to death, the death of the cross," Phil. ii, 8. This was the highest instance of obedience that God ever had from a creature, because performed by him who was God also, and therefore was an abundant compensation for the disobedience of Adam, Rom. v, 19. So did he travail in the exercise of grace.

3. He labored also with respect to that *confluence of calamities*, distresses, pains, and miseries, which was upon his whole nature. In that death of the body which he underwent, and the *manner* of it, much of the curse of the law was executed. Hence our apostle proves that he was made a *curse* for us, from that of Moses, "Cursed is every one that *hangeeth on a tree*;" Gal. iii, 13, Deut. xxi, 22, 23; for the ignominy of being "hanged on a tree," was peculiarly appointed to represent the "execution of the curse" of the law on Jesus Christ, who "in his own body bore our sins upon the tree," 1 Pet. ii, 24. And herein lies no small

mystery of the wisdom of God. He would have a resemblance of the sufferings of Christ among them that suffered under the sentence of the law; but in the whole law there was no appointment that any one should be put to death by being "hanged." Now as God foreknew, that at the time of the suffering of Christ the Jewish nation would be under the power of the Romans, and that the sentence of death would be inflicted after *their* manner, which was by being nailed to, and "hanged on a cross," he ordered for a prefiguration of it, that some great transgressors, as blasphemers, and open idolaters, *after* they were stoned, should be "hanged upon a tree," to make a declaration of the curse of the law inflicted on them. Hence it is peculiarly said of such a one, "He that is hanged on a tree is the curse of God;" because God did therein represent the suffering of Him, who underwent the *whole* curse for us.

And in this *manner* of his death sundry things concurred; and among these, may we not consider it as a *natural sign* of his readiness to embrace all sinners that should come to him, his arms, as it were, being stretched out to receive them? Isa. xliii, 22, and lxxv, 1: and also as a *moral token* of his condition, being left, as one rejected of all, between heaven and earth for a season; but yet really interposing between heaven and earth, the justice of God and the sins of men, to make reconciliation and peace? Eph. ii, 16, 17. And may we not consider it as the accomplishment of sundry *types*; as of him who was "hanged on a tree," as cursed of the Lord? Deut. xxi, 22; Of the *brazen serpent*, which was lifted up in the wilderness? John iii, 14, xii, 32; Of the *wave offering*? Exod. xxix, 26. During all these things there was continually in his eye that unspeakable glory which was set before him,

of being the repairer of the breaches of the creation—the recoverer of mankind—the captain of salvation to all that obey him—the destruction of Satan, with his kingdom of sin and darkness—and in all, the great restorer of divine glory, to the eternal praise of Jehovah. Whilst all these things were in the height of their being transacted, is it any wonder that the Lord Christ labored and travailed in soul, according to the description here given of him?

19. *Obs. 6.* The Lord Jesus at the time of his sufferings, considering God as the sovereign Lord of life and death, as the Supreme Rector and Judge of all, casts himself before him with most fervent prayers for deliverance from the sentence of death and curse of the law. This gives the true account of the deportment of our Savior in his trial here described. There are two great mistakes about his sufferings, and the condition of his soul therein. Some place him in that *security*, in that sense and enjoyment of divine love, that they leave neither room nor reason for the *fears*, *cries*, and *wrestlings* here mentioned; as if there was nothing real in all this transaction, but all things were alone rather for ostentation and show: for, they suppose, if Christ was always in a full comprehension of divine love, and that in the light of the beatific vision, what can these conflicts and complaints signify? Others grant that he was in real distress and anguish; but, say they, it was merely on account of those *outward* sufferings which were coming on him. But this, as we observed before, is an intolerable impeachment of his holy fortitude and constancy of mind; for the like outward things have been undergone by others, without any tokens of such consternation of spirit. Wherefore to discern aright the *true frame* of the spirit of Christ, with the intenseness of his cries and supplica-

tions, the things before insisted on are duly to be considered. Hence *infer*;

§20. How great a matter was it to make peace with God for sinners, to make *atonement* for sin, and establish our *reconciliation* with God. This is the life and spirit of our religion, the centre wherein all the lines of it meet, Phil. iii, 8—10, 1 Cor. ii, 2, Gal. vi, 14. And those by whom a constant consideration of it is neglected, are strangers to the animating spirit of that religion which they outwardly profess; and therefore Satan employs all his artifices to divert the minds of men from exercising faith and a due meditation on it. To this cause we ascribe much of the devotion of the *Romanists*, which effectually draws off the mind not only from a spiritual contemplation of the excellency of Christ's offering, and its glorious benefits, but also from the rational comprehension of the truth of the doctrine concerning what he did and suffered.

On the other hand, the *Socinians* please themselves and deceive others with a vain imagination, that there was *no such work to be done*. If we may believe them, there was no atonement to be made for sin, no *expiatory sacrifice* to be offered, no *peace* thereby to be made with God, no compensation to his justice, by answering the sentence and curse of the law due to sin. But surely, if they had not an unpardonable mixture of confidence and dexterity, they could not find out evasions against so many express divine testimonies as are directly opposite to their fond imagination, even tolerably to satisfy their own minds; or to suppose that any man can with patience bear the account they must give of the agency, prayers, cries, tears, fears, wrestling, and travail of the soul of Christ on their supposition. But we may pass them over at present as express enemies of the cross of Christ; that is, of that

cross whereby he "made peace with God for sinners," Ephes. ii, 14—16.

Others there are, who by no means approve of any diligent inquiry into these mysteries. Our whole duty, according to them, is to be conversant in *morality*: but as for this fountain of grace; this basis of eternal glory; this demonstration of divine wisdom, holiness, righteousness, and love; this great discovery of the parity of the law, and vileness of sin; this first, great, principal subject of the gospel, and motive of faith and obedience; this root and cause of all peace with God; all sincere and uncorrupted love towards him; of all joy and consolation from him—they think it scarcely deserves a place among the objects of their contemplations. But such as are admitted into the *fellowship* of the sufferings of Christ, will not so easily part with their immortal interest therein: yea, I fear not to say it, that he is likely to be the best, the most humble, the most holy and fruitful Christian, who is most *diligent* in spiritual inquiries into this great mystery of reconciliation by the blood of the cross, and in the exercise of *faith* about it. Nor is there any such powerful means of preserving the soul in a constant abhorrence of sin and watchfulness against it, as a due apprehension of what it cost to make atonement for it. And we may also learn hence,

§21. 1. That a sight and sense of the wrath of God due to sin, will be full of dread and terror, and will put men to a great conflict with wrestling for deliverance. We find how it was with our Lord in that condition; and such a view of the wrath of God *all men* will be brought to, sooner or later. There is a view to be had of it in the curse of the law at present; but there will be a more terrible display of it in the *execution* of that curse at the last day, and no way is there to obtain a

deliverance from either, but by obtaining a spiritual view of it in the cross of Christ, and acquiescing by faith in that atonement. Hence observe,

§21. 1. In all the pressures that were on the Lord Jesus Christ, in all the distresses he had to conflict with in his suffering, his faith for deliverance and success was firm and unconquerable: this was the ground he stood upon in all his prayers and supplications.

2. The success of our Lord in his trials, as our head and surety, is a pledge and assurance of success to us in all our spiritual conflicts.

VERSE 8.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.

§1. Introduction and dependence of the words. §2. 3. Their explanation. §4. (I) The obedience of Christ. §5. (II.) His learning it. §6. (III.) Its what means. §7. (IV) Observations. 1 Infinite love prevailed with the Son of God to suffer for us. §8. 2. Notwithstanding all his sufferings, Christ was still the Son of God. §9. 3. A practical experience of obedience, in some cases, will cost us dear. §10. Other observations.

§1. **T**HE things discoursed in the foregoing verse seem to have an inconsistency with the account given us concerning the person of Jesus Christ, at the entrance of this epistle. For he is therein declared to be "the Son of God," and that in such a glorious manner as to be deservedly exalted above all the angels in heaven. He is so said to be the Son of God, as to be "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," even partaker of the same nature with him; God, by whom the heavens were made, and the foundations of the earth were laid, chap. 1, 8—10. But here he is represented in a low, distressed condition, humbly begging for his life, and pleading with strong cries and tears before Him who was able

to deliver him. These things might seem to the Hebrews, and indeed are to many to this day, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; they are not able to reconcile them in their carnal minds. Wherefore since it is by all acknowledged, that he was really in the low, distressed condition here described, they will not allow that he was the "Son of God," in the way declared by the apostle; but invent *other reasons* of their own, for which he should be so termed. The aim of the apostle in this place is not to refute the objections of infidels, but to build up the faith of believers in the truth and reason of these things. For he doth not only manifest that they are all *possible*, on account of his "participation of flesh and blood," who was himself the eternal Son of God, but also that the whole of his humiliation and distress was *necessary* with respect to the office which he had undertaken to discharge.

§2. (ΚΑΙΤΕΡ, *Quamvis, tametsi*) *although*; an adversative, with a concession. An exception may be supposed to what was before delivered; if he were a Son, how came he to pray and cry, so as to stand in need of help? But, saith the apostle, *although* he was a Son, yet these other things were *necessary*. And according to the apostle's usual mode of reasoning in this epistle, there is also a prospect in this word towards the necessity and *advantage* of his being brought into the condition described; which in our translation is supplied by the addition of "*yet*."

(ΤΙΣ ΟΥ) *He was a Son*; and yet, "being a Son;" that is, *such* a Son as we have described, or, *that* Son of God. It was no *singular* thing for a son or child of God by *adoption* to be chastised, to suffer, and thereby to be instructed to obedience. He therefore speaks not of him as a son on *any* account, or such as

any mere creature can claim an interest in; but he was God's "own Son," Rom. viii, 32, the "only begotten of the Father," John i, 14, who was also "in the form of God," Phil. ii, 7. That ~~he~~ should do the things here spoken of, is great and marvellous; therefore it is said, he did thus, "*although* he was a son." Here is implied both the *necessity* of doing what was here ascribed to him, and his *love*, that he would submit to this condition for our sakes. On his *own* account no such thing was required, or any way needful to him; but for our sakes (such was his love) he would do it, "although he was a Son." Besides, whereas the apostle is comparing the Lord Christ as an high priest, with Aaron and those of his order, he intimates a double advantage which he had above them—That he was a *Son*, whereas they were *servants* only; as he had before expressed the same difference in comparing him with Moses, chap. iii, 4—6—That he *learned obedience* by what he suffered, which few of them did, and none of them in the same manner.

§3. As to the phraseology; (ἐκ τῶν) "*from the things*," seems to be put for (ἐξ τῶν) "*out of, by, from, the things*." And moreover, there is an *ellipsis* in the words—"by the things *which* he suffered." There is some correspondence in the whole to that ancient saying, (τα πεινυματα μαθηματα) "*afflictions are instructions*."

Three things we are to inquire into: (1.) What is the *obedience* which is here intended. (2.) How Christ is said to *learn* it. (3.) By what means he did so.

§4. (I.) "He learned *obedience*," (ὕπακοη) an "*obediential attendance*" to the authoritative commands of another; the word originally signifying to "*hear*," hence to *hearken*, or to *hear*, is frequently used in

scripture for to obey and to refuse to hear is to be stubborn and *disobedient*, because *obedience* respects the commands of another, which we generally receive by *hearing*. The term (*obedience*) therefore, imports an *obediential compliance* with the commands of another, when we hear and thereby know them.

This obedience in Christ was two-fold:

1. *General*, in the whole course of his holy life in our world: every thing he did was not only materially holy, but formally obedient: he did all things, because it was the will of God that he should. And this obedience to God was the life and beauty of the holiness even of Christ himself; but yet this is not the obedience here peculiarly intended, although no part of it can be absolutely excluded from the present consideration. For whereas this obedience hath respect to *suffering*, "he learned it from the things that he suffered;" his *whole life* was a life of suffering. One way or other he suffered in all that he did. His state in this world was a state of humiliation and *exile*, which things have somewhat of suffering in their nature. His outward condition in the world was low and indigent, from which sufferings are inseparable. And he was in all things exposed to temptations, and all sorts of oppositions from Satan and the world, which also added to his sufferings.

2. But yet, there was a *peculiar obedience* of Christ, which is intended here in an especial manner. This was his obedience in *dying*, and in all things that tended immediately thereto. He became "obedient to *death*, even the death of the *cross*;" for this commandment had he of his Father, that he should "lay down his life;" and therefore did it in a way of obedience. And this obedience to the command of God for suffering and dying, is what the apostle here re-

quoniam. With regard to this all-momentous event, he said of old, "Lo, I come in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God," Psal. xl, 7, 8, which was in offering himself a sacrifice for us, as our apostle declares, Heb. x, 9, 10. And concerning the things which befell him herein, he says, "he was not rebellious, but gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair," Isa. l, 6.

55. (II.) Concerning this obedience, it is said, that *(pauke)* he *learned it*. The word *(pauke)* signifies to learn as a disciple; with a humble, willing subjection to, and a ready-reception of the instructions given: but of Christ it is said here, he "learned obedience;" not that he "learned to obey;" which distinction will give us light into the meaning of the whole. For to "learn obedience," may have a three-fold sense:

1. To learn it *materially*, by coming to know that to be our duty, which before we knew not, or at least did not consider as we ought. So speaks the Psalmist: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I learned thy commandments." God, by his chastisements, and while he was under the correcting rod, taught him the duties he required of him, and what diligent attendance to them was necessary for him. But thus our Lord Jesus Christ neither did nor could learn obedience; for he knew beforehand what he was to do and to undergo. And the law of the whole of it was "in his heart;" no command of God was *new* to him, nor ever *forgotten* by him.

2. To learn it *formally*; that is, to be guided, instructed, directed, and helped in the various acts of the "obedience" required. This is properly to "learn to obey;" so it is with us, who are rude and unskilled in holy obedienas; we learn (and that, alas! but imper-

fectly at best) partly by the word, partly by afflictions, as God is pleased to make them effectual. But *thus* the Lord Jesus neither did, nor could learn obedience. He had a constant fulness of grace always inclining, directing, guiding, and enabling him to all acts of obedience. Being full of grace, truth, and wisdom, he was *never at a loss* for what he had to do; nor wanted any thing of a perfect readiness of mind and will for its performance. Wherefore,

8. He can be said to "*learn* obedience" only on the account of having an *experience* of it in its exercise. So a man knoweth the taste and flavor of meat by eating it. As our Savior is said to "taste of death;" or to *experience* what was in it, by undergoing it: the "obedience" he learned was a submission to undergo great, hard, and terrible things, accompanied with patience and quiet endurance under them, and faith for deliverance from them. This he could have no "*experience*" of, but by suffering the things he was to undergo, and the exercise of his grace. Thus he "*learned* obedience," or *experienced in himself* what difficulty it is attended with. And *this way* of his learning obedience is that which is so useful to us, and so full of consolation; for if he had only *known* obedience, though never so perfectly in the notion of it, what relief could have accrued to us from it? How could it have been a spring of suitable compassion towards us? But now, whereas he himself took, in our person, *full experience* of the nature of that special obedience which is yielded to God in a suffering condition, what difficulty it is attended with, what opposition is made to it, how great an exercise of grace is required in it, he is constantly ready to give us relief, as the matter requireth.

§6. (III.) We have, in the last place, the way or means of his learning obedience, ($\alpha\phi' \omega\nu \epsilon\pi\alpha\theta\epsilon$) "*from the things that he suffered*," we cannot exclude from hence any thing that Christ *suffered*; but seeing the apostle treats of him as an High Priest, and with a special respect to his *offering*, the "*suffering of death*" must be principally intended. Sufferings, in their own nature, are not instructive. All things that come outwardly upon us are ($\epsilon\kappa \tau\omega\nu \mu\epsilon\theta\omega\nu$) *indifferent*, in this sense, that they may be either abused or improved. But in believers they give *occasion* to the exercise of those graces wherein our obedience then consisteth. So from them, or by them, did our Lord learn obedience; for by reason of them he had occasion to exercise the graces of humility, self-denial, meekness, patience, faith, &c. which were habitually resident in his holy nature. To which we must add the consideration of a sinless person suffering for sinners, "*the just for the unjust*," which was peculiar to Christ, and of which we can have no experience. We now proceed to the observations:

§7. (IV.) *Obs. 1.* Infinite love prevailed with the Son of God to lay aside the privilege of his infinite dignity, that he might suffer for us and our redemption. "Although he was a Son, yet he learned," &c. The name of "Son" carrieth with it infinite dignity, as our apostle proves at large, chap. i, 3, 4, &c. Nor could the whole creation divest him of it. But he voluntarily laid aside the consideration, advantage, and exercise of it, that he might suffer for us. This our apostle fully expresseth, Phil. ii, 5—8, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was

fectly at best) partly by the word, partly by afflictions, as God is pleased to make them effectual. But *thus* the Lord Jesus neither did, nor could learn obedience. He had a constant fulness of grace always inclining, directing, guiding, and enabling him to all acts of obedience. Being full of grace, truth, and wisdom, he was *never at a loss* for what he had to do; nor wanted any thing of a perfect readiness of mind and will for its performance. Wherefore,

8. He can be said to "*learn* obedience" only on the account of having an *experience* of it in its exercise. So a man knoweth the taste and flavor of meat by eating it. As our Savior is said to "*taste of death*;" or to *experience* what was in it, by undergoing it: the "*obedience*" he learned was a submission to undergo great, hard, and terrible things, accompanied with patience and quiet endurance under them, and faith for deliverance from them. This he could have no "*experience*" of, but by suffering the things he was to undergo, and the exercise of his grace. Thus he "*learned* obedience," or *experienced in himself* what difficulty it is attended with. And *this way* of his learning obedience is that which is so useful to us, and so full of consolation; for if he had only *known* obedience, though never so perfectly in the notion of it, what relief could have accrued to us from it? How could it have been a spring of suitable compassion towards us? But now, whereas he himself took, in our person, *full experience* of the nature of that special obedience which is yielded to God in a suffering condition, what difficulty it is attended with, what opposition is made to it, how great an exercise of grace is required in it, he is constantly ready to *relieve* us, as the matter requireth.

made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And here we may,

(1.) As it were, *lose ourselves* in an holy admiration of this infinite love of Christ. Our apostle prays for the Ephesians, that they might be "able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," Eph. iii, 18, 19 This, it seems, is the design and endeavor of *all* saints,—to come to an acquaintance with, or to live in contemplation of the love of Christ. Which way soever we exercise our thoughts about it, there is still a *suitable* object for them; and yet he so prays for the knowledge of it, as to let us know that *absolutely* it is incomprehensible; it "*passeth knowledge*." Then do we in our measure know the love of Christ, when we know that it "*passeth knowledge*;" and thereby we have the benefit and consolation of what we *do not* conceive, as well as of what we *do*. For as *contemplation* is an act of faith, with respect to our measure of comprehension; so is *admiration*, with respect to what exceeds it. What way soever faith acts itself towards Christ, it will bring advantage and refreshment to the soul. And we are never nearer Christ, than when we find ourselves—lost in an holy amazement at his unspeakable love!—On the contrary,

(2.) Here we may, if I may so express it, *find ourselves*. The due consideration of this love of Christ is that alone which will *satisfy our souls* and consciences with the grounds of our acceptance in the presence of the Holy God. What will not this love, and its unparalleled effects, prevail for? What can stand in its way?

§8. *Obs. 2.* Notwithstanding all his sufferings, Christ was still the Son of God. He had in them all the *state* of a son, and the *love* of a son. It is true, during the time of his suffering, a common eye, an eye of sense and mere reason, could see no appearance of this sonship. His outward circumstances rather eclipsed than manifested his glory, Isa. liii, 2, 3. Hence he was to the world "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence," Rom. ix, 33. The comparative meanness of his condition, the poverty of his life, and shame of his death, proved an offence to both Jews and Gentiles. How could such a one be thought to be the Son of God? Besides, God himself laid his curse upon him, as it is written, "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And in all this state of things, he speaks of himself as one made so much beneath the condition of glory which was due to the Son of God, as that he was lower than any; "I am a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people," Psalm xxii, 6. Yet during all this he was still the "Son of God;" hence it is said, that "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," that is, to suffering and death, Rom. viii, 32. And yet (great is the mystery of godliness!) in all he underwent, neither was the union of his nature dissolved; nor the love of the Father to him as a Son in the least impeached.

§9. *Obs. 3.* A practical experience of obedience to God, in *some cases*, will cost us dear; we cannot "learn" it, but through "suffering." I intend not here the difficulties we meet with in mortifying the internal lusts and corruptions of our nature; for these had no place in the example proposed to us: those only are respected which come upon us from without. And it is an especial kind of obedience also, which holds some

conformity to the obedience of Christ, that is intended. Wherefore,

(1.) It must be *singular*; it must have somewhat in it that may in an especial manner turn the eyes of others towards it. A common cause of obedience, clothed with a common profession, may escape at an easy rate in the world. There seems to be somewhat singular in that expression; "He that will live *godly* in Christ Jesus," &c. 2 Tim. iii, 12. To live in Christ Jesus, is to live and walk in the profession of the gospel, to be a professing branch in Christ, (John xv, 2,) but of these there are two sorts; some that live "*godly*" in him; some branches that "bring forth fruit," that is, in an eminent and singular degree. Every branch in the true vine hath that whereby it is distinguished from brambles and thorns; and every one that lives in the profession of the gospel, hath somewhat whereby he is distinguished from the world and its ways. But there is a peculiar, a *singular fruit-bearing* in Christ, which will attract attention. So our apostle says, that they were made "a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men," by the especial ministry which was committed to them, 1 Cor. iv, 9.

(2.) It is required that this obedience be *universal*. If there be in any *one instance* an allowed compliance with the world, or other enemies of our obedience, the trouble of it will be much abated. For men, by indulging themselves in any crooked steps, as it were, *compound* for outward peace; and when they obtain their aims, how greatly is it to their spiritual disadvantage! But the gospel obedience which we refer to, is such as agrees in conformity to Christ in all things; and this will cost us dear. "Sufferings" will attend it. They that "live *godly* in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." For this kind of obedience will be observ-

ed in the world. It cannot escape observation because it is singular. And it provokes the world, because it is universal, and will admit of no compliance with it. And where the world is first *roused*, and then *enraged*, trouble and suffering of one kind or another will ensue. If it do not bite and tear, it will bark and rage; and Satan will see enough in them to make them his *especial mark*. Yea, and God himself oftentimes delighteth to try eminent graces, where he endows any with them. For he gives them not merely for their peculiar advantage on whom they are bestowed, but that he *himself* may have a revenue of glory from their exercise. We may further observe:

§10. 1. Sufferings undergone according to the will of God, are highly *instructive*. Even Christ himself “learned” by the things that he suffered, and much more may we do so, who have much more to learn. God designs our sufferings to this end, and to this end he blesseth them. And this hath frequently been the issue of God’s dealing with men; those who have suffered most, have been most afflicted, most chastised, have been the most humble, most holy, fruitful, and wise among them.

2. In all these things, both as to suffering, and learning, or profiting thereby, we have a great example in the Lord Jesus Christ. As such he is proposed to us in all his course of obedience, especially in his sufferings, 1 Pet. ii, 21.

3. The *love* of God towards any, and the *relation* of any to God, hinders not but that they may undergo great sufferings and trials; Christ did so although “he was a son.” And this instance irrefragably confirms our observation. For the *love* of God to Jesus Christ was singular and supereminent; he doth not love any with a love so much as of the same kind. The *rela-*

tion also of Christ to God was singular; none ever standing in the same relation to him, he being his "only begotten Son." And yet his sufferings and trials were singular also. No sorrows, no pains, no distresses of soul and body, no sufferings like his. And in the whole course of the scripture we may observe, that the nearer any have been to God, the greater have been their trials. For—There is not in such trials any thing that is absolutely evil, but are all such as may be rendered good, useful, yea in the event honorable and glorious. The love of God in its gracious emanations, abundantly *compensates* the temporal evils which any do undergo according to his will. And finally—The glory of God, which shall infallibly ensue upon all the sufferings of his people, is such a good in their esteem, as far surpasses any supposed evil in their sufferings.

VERSE 9.

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.

§1. Introduction, and statement of the subject. §2. (I.) What Christ accomplished by his sufferings, on his own part. §3.—5. (II.) What with respect to believers. §6. (III.) Observations. 1. All that befell Christ was necessary to his becoming the cause of eternal salvation to any. §7. 2. He alone is the principal cause of it. §8. 3. Salvation is confined to believers.

§1. **T**HE words and design of *this verse* have so great a coincidence with those of chap. ii, 10, that we shall have the less need to insist upon them; excepting what is necessary to point out their relation to the context. The apostle, having declared the sufferings of Christ, as our High Priest, in his offering of himself, with the necessity thereof, proceeds to declare what was effected thereby, and what was the special design of God therein; which was, that the Lord Redeemer

might be every way fitted to be a *perfect cause of eternal salvation* to all them that obey him. There are therefore two things in the words, as accomplished in the sufferings of Christ:

First, On his own part, that he might be "made perfect," with respect to the administration of his office in behalf of sinners.

Secondly, With respect to believers, that he might be to them an "author of eternal salvation."

§2. (I.) (Τελειωθείς) "*being perfected.*" The word is sacred, and the sense of it here answers directly to its use, chap. ii, 10: (τελειώσει) "*to perfect by suffering.*" Only *there* it is used actively, with respect to God the Father; it "*became him to make perfect*" the captain of our salvation; *here* it is used *passively*, with respect to the effect of that act. The sum is, that it signifies to dedicate, to consecrate, to set apart by some kind of suffering or other. So the legal high priests were consecrated by the death and sufferings of the beasts offered in sacrifice at their consecration, Exod. xxix. But it belonged to the perfection of Christ as a Priest, that he be consecrated by his *own* sufferings; which was necessary both from the *nature* of his office, to which he was solemnly to be set apart, and to answer the types of the Aaronical priesthood. This alone hath any difficulty attending it; how the Lord Jesus can be said to be "consecrated by his own sufferings in his offering," when his offering itself was an act of that office to which he was consecrated? But I answer; that, seeing an *external* means of his consecration was necessary, it was impossible that he should be consecrated by any other sacrifice; any other offering for the purpose would have been repugnant to the whole design of God, and destructive of the Redeemer's office. Again; he could not consecrate himself,

by an *antecedent* offering of himself (which would involve an absurdity;) it was therefore indispensably necessary, that he should be consecrated by the sacrifice of himself, and the sufferings wherewith it was accompanied. But this was the only *external means* of his consecration, by way of evidence, that he was really consecrated by the acts of God the Father and himself before.

§3. (II.) Being thus consecrated (*εγενετο*) he *was made, he became, or he was the "author,"* (*αυτορ*) a cause in general; and sometimes an efficient, at other times a meritorious cause is expressed by it. The apostle therefore hath respect to all the ways and means whereby the Lord Christ either procured salvation for us or doth actually bestow it upon us.—We may therefore consider him as the author of eternal salvation, either with respect to his acts whereby he procured it; or with respect to the effects of them, whereby it is actually communicated to us; and when he is said to be the *author* of our salvation, nothing appears necessary to be excluded whereby he is so. As the *meritorious cause* of our salvation, he is the author of it by his oblation and his intercession. And his oblation contains—The *satisfaction* he made for sins, with the *expiation* of our guilt, and—the merit of his obedience, by which he procured this salvation for us, Heb. ix, 24. On these two accounts was he in his *oblation* the author or cause of our salvation. He is so likewise on account of his intercession; for this is that way whereby, with respect to God, he makes effectual to us what he procured, Heb. vii, 25—27. But he is also the *efficient cause* of our salvation; in as much as he doth it by his spirit, his grace, and his glorious power actually communicate and confer it upon us. He teacheth us the way of salvation, and leads us into it; he makes us meet for it, and saves

us from the power of sin, quickening, enlightening, and sanctifying us; he preserves and secures it to us, gives an entrance into it, and assurance of it, in justification and peace with God. He will actually by his glorious power bestow upon us immortal life and glory; or give us the full possession of this salvation. In all these respects, with those many other streams of grace, which flow from them, is Christ said to be the "author of our salvation."

§4. This salvation is said to be "eternal"—*absolutely*, comparatively, and emphatically.—*Absolutely*; it is endless and unchangeable. By sin we had made ourselves obnoxious to damnation absolutely eternal; and if the salvation procured for us were not equally eternal, it would not be perfect, nor suited to our condition.—*Comparatively*; or in opposition to those temporal salvations, which the people under the law were made partakers of, by the interposition of their legal priests and sacrifices. And perhaps also respect may be had to the deliverance of the people of God out of bondage, with their introduction into the land of Canaan, which was a temporary salvation only. *Emphatically*; it takes off indeed all temporal punishments, all effects of the curse of the law; it gives temporal deliverance from fear and bondage by reason thereof; it supplies us with mercy, grace, and peace with God in this world: but, all these things issuing in eternal blessedness, that being the end of them, being all bestowed on us in a tendency thereto, the whole is emphatically called eternal.

§5. Lastly, there is a limitation of the subjects of this salvation; it is "to all them that obey him," (τοῖς υπακούουσιν αὐτῷ πασιν.) The expression is emphatical; "to all and every one of them that obey him;" not any one of them shall be excepted from an interest

in this salvation; and it belongs only to them that obey him; whether there be any other "author of salvation" to those who are wilfully ignorant, and habitually disobey him, they may do well to inquire who suppose that such may be saved. The Greek term (*υπακούω*) imports to "obey him upon hearing." (*Dicto obedire;*) originally it signifies only to hearken or to hear with a readiness or subjection of mind to what is heard accordingly. Hence it is faith, which cometh by hearing, that in the first place is intended in this obedience; partly, because the object of it, which is the promise, is proposed outwardly to it in the word; and partly, because the preaching of the word, which we receive by hearing, is the only ordinary means of ingenerating faith. Hence to believe is expressed by "*to hear*," so as to answer the end of what is proposed to us. The consequent subjecting of our souls to Christ, in the keeping of his commands, is the obedience of faith. We may now draw some observations from the words for our further instruction. As,

§6. (III.) *Obs.* 1. All that befell the Lord Redeemer, all he did or suffered, was necessary to this end,—that he might be the cause of eternal salvation to believers. Some have said that *one drop* of the blood of Christ was sufficient for the salvation of the whole world. And others have improved the hint, pretending that the overplus of his merit is committed to *their* disposal, which they manage to advantage. But the truth is, every drop of his blood, that is all he did and all he suffered, for matter and manner, in substance and circumstance was indispensably necessary for this end. For God did not afflict his Son without cause in any thing, and his whole obedience was afflictive. And hence it is evident how great a matter

it is to have sinners made partakers of redemption; how great and infinite was that wisdom, that love and grace, which contrived and effected it; how great and terrible will be the ruin of them by whom salvation is despised, when tendered according to the gospel!

§7. *Obs. 2.* The Lord Christ alone is the only principal cause of our salvation. There are many instrumental causes of it in sundry kinds. So is faith; the word; and all gospel ordinances. They instrumentally farther salvation, but in all subordination to Christ, who is the principal, and who alone gives efficacy to all others. So much as they have of Christ in them, so much as they convey of Christ to us, of so much use they are and no more. This, therefore, is the great wisdom of faith, to esteem Christ, and to rest upon him, as the only author of salvation.

§8. *Obs. 3.* Salvation is confined to "believers;" and those who look for salvation by Christ, must secure it to themselves by faith and obedience. He came to save sinners, but not such as choose to continue "disobedient," in their sins. Though the gospel be full of love, of grace, of mercy, and pardon, yet herein the sentence of it is peremptory and decreed, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

VERSE 10.

Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

§1. The design and connexion of the words. §2. (I.) Their explanation. §3. (II.) Observation. God was pleased to put a signal honor upon Melchisedec as a representative of Christ. §4. Additional observations.

§1. **I**N this verse the apostle returns to the *improvement* of the testimony given to the priesthood of Christ, from Psalm cx. And hereby he makes way

for another necessary digression, without which he could not profitably pursue his intended instruction from that testimony. He had as yet only inferred from it that Christ was a priest in general, with his necessary sacerdotal actings; but he had yet a farther intention in producing it—to declare the *special nature and pre-eminence* of his priesthood, as shadowed out by that of Melchisedec. The demonstration of this he now designs. But so soon as he hath laid down his general assertion in these words, considering the greatness and difficulty of the matter in hand, with regard to the Hebrews, he diverts to a preparatory digression, wherein he continues the remainder of this, and the whole ensuing chapter, resuming his purpose here proposed in the beginning of the seventh.

§2. (1.) (προσκαγομενθεις) *Called*; he refers to the testimony produced, ver. 6,—that Christ, the Son of God, was a priest after the order of Melchisedec. But now the priesthood of Christ and of Melchisedec were not the same. He is not said to be a priest of the order, but (על דברתי, κατὰ ταξιν) *according to the things spoken* of Melchisedec, as he was a priest; after the manner of what is related concerning him. And this, in my judgment, is the reason of using the word (προσκαγομενθεις) *called*, in this place; for it doth not signify a *call to office* (that is, καλησ, constantly,) but is the denomination of him who is called, for some certain reason. Because, saith the apostle, of the special resemblance that was between what Melchisedec was, and what Christ was to be, God called his priesthood *Melchisedecian*, and not *Aaronical*.

Called of God, (αρχιερεus) an *High Priest*; every high priest was a priest absolutely; but some sacerdotal duties were peculiarly reserved to the former. For instance, the offering of some sacrifices, as that of the

great atonement, which were peculiarly typical of the sacerdotal actions of Christ, was committed to him alone. So is Christ called (*ιερευς*) a Priest absolutely, as being invested with the real office of the priesthood, and he is termed (*αρχιερευς*) the *Chief or High Priest*, (not because there were any other of the same order with himself, but) because all the *pre-eminences* of the priesthood were in him alone. He was thus called an high priest, (*κατα την ταξιν Μελχισεδεκ*) according to the order of Melchisedec. This is not a limitation of the priesthood to a certain order, (as before observed) but a reference to that priesthood whereby his was most eminently pre-figured. And herein our apostle intends; *First*, A concession that he was not an high priest according to the order of Aaron: *Secondly*, That there was a priesthood antecedent to, and diverse from that of Aaron, appointed of God to represent the manner how he would call the Lord Messiah to his priestly office. For as he without ceremony, without sacrifice, without visible consecration, without the law of a carnal commandment, was constituted an high priest, so was Christ also by an immediate order of the Father, saying unto him, "Thou art my Son, a priest for ever, after the power of an endless life." And in this sense he is called a priest "after the order of Melchisedec."

§3. (II.) *Obs.* God was pleased to put a signal honor upon the person and office of Melchisedec, that in them there should be an early and excellent representation made of the person and priesthood of Jesus Christ. Who this Melchisedec was, and wherein consisted the nature of his priesthood, will be afterwards considered. In the mean time, observe in general that—all the real honor that God did to any person under the Old Testament, was in order to pre-

figure the person of Christ, that in all he might have the pre-eminence. He was the first personal type of Christ in the world. After him there were others, as Isaac, and Aaron, Joshua, David, and Solomon; but he was the first,—he was a type of Christ in those two great offices of a *King* and a *Priest*, which none but he ever was.—To which we may add, that no other was “made like the Son of God,” or represented his person.

§4. To the foregoing observation, the following may be added:

1. As the Lord Christ received all his honor as mediator from God the Father, so the ground and measure of our giving glory to him, as such, depend on the revelation and declaration of it to us. He was declared of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. He made him so, which, was his honor; he declared him to be so, whence we ought to give all honor to him. And from the respect these words have to the preceding verse, we may observe,

2. It is an evidence and testimony that the Lord Christ was able to be, and really is, the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him, because he is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, that is, that his priesthood is *eternal*.

VERSE 11.

Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

§1. Introduction. §2—4. (I.) Exposition. §5. (II.) Observations. 1. Many revealed truths are deep and mysterious, and demand our diligent attention. §6, 7. 2. Ministers should sometimes insist on the most difficult truths. §8. 3. Men's criminal slothfulness the cause of their non-improvement. Preparation for hearing. §9. Actual hearing. §10. After hearing. §11. Other observations.

§1. **I**N this verse the apostle enters upon his designed digression, expressing the *occasion* of it. And it

consists in such awakening admonitions, as we now stand in need of (no less than they) when we are to be excited to a due attendance to spiritual and mysterious truths.

§2. (1.) (Περὶ οὗ) "concerning whom," that is, Melchisedec. The apostle's purpose is to treat of him so far as he was a type of Christ; hence some render the words (περὶ οὗ) by *de quare*; of which matter, that is, the similitude and conformity between Melchisedec and Christ, which also is a great and instructive truth.

(Ἰσχυρὸν καὶ πολλὸν λόγος) "We have much to say;" not only the multitude of the things which he had to speak, but also the importance of them is intended. However, I deny not, but that the apostle intimates that there were many things of that importance to be insisted on, on this occasion; but would not immediately engage in that work, until he had spoken to them, what was needful to prepare their due attention.

§3. (Λόγος δυσεξηγήνευλος λέγειν) "A discourse hard to be uttered." It may be the things which Paul himself here calls, (δυσεξηγήνευλα) "hard to be uttered," are those which Peter intends in his epistle, calling them (δυσνόητα, 2 Peter iii, 16,) "Things hard to be understood." When it is spoken (λέγειν put for ἐν τῷ λέγειν, in dicendo) it is hard to be interpreted; that is, to be understood, for the interpretation intended is not that of the apostle in speaking; but that made in the understanding of them that hear it. He that hears a thing uttered interprets it to himself. The apostle doth not intimate that it would be any difficult matter for him to declare the conformity between Melchisedec and Christ; for what he received by revelation was no matter of difficulty to him; nor that his manner of declaring it would be obscure; for it is of things themselves, and not of the manner of their

declaration, that he speaks; as also doth Peter in the place mentioned. He doth not speak of these things only with respect to their own nature, but to *our understandings*, which are weak and imperfect. This is what the apostle chargeth in particular upon these Hebrews in this verse.

§4. The reason is added; "Seeing you are *slothful, slow, or dull in hearing.*" This word is nowhere used in the New Testament, but here and chap. vi, 12, where we render it "slothful." (*Νηπιος, est qui non facile potest, ωθεισθαι*) "one that is not easily stirred or moved;" heavy, unactive, dull, opposed to diligence in his business; as Prov. xxii, 20, (*Ταις ανοιαις*) "dull in hearing;" the word (*αουη*) is used both for the ear, the faculty of hearing, the act of hearing, and the things heard. Wherefore, *slothful in hearing*," whereby the apostle declares the faults of these Hebrews, is a metaphorical expression, and imports as much as this: "You are in hearing the word, like slothful persons who accomplish no endeavors, attain no good end, because of their dulness and inactivity." Such persons Solomon paints to the life, Prov. xii, 27, and xv, 19, &c. He abounds in reproving it, as being one of the most pernicious vices that our nature is subject to. And in the reproach that Christ will cast upon unfaithful ministers at the last day, there is nothing greater than that they were "slothful," Matt. xxv, 26. It is not a natural imbecility of mind that he blames in them; nor a want of learning, to search into things deep and difficult; for these are not crimes; but it is a moral negligence and inadvertency, a want of the discharge of their duty according to their ability, in attending to the means of instruction he chargeth them with. The *natural dulness* of our minds in receiving spiritual things is, it may be, included; but our *de*

praved affections, a neglect of our duty as here condemned. And there are sundry things wherein we are hereby instructed: as,

§5. (II.) *Obs.* 1. There are revealed in the scriptures sundry deep and mysterious truths, which require a *peculiar diligence* in our attendance to their declaration, that we may rightly understand, or receive them in a due manner. We may safely grant that what is not clearly delivered in the scripture, is of no indispensable necessity to be known and believed. And surely the mysteries that are clearly revealed in the scripture, as to the doctrine of them, are sufficient to exercise the utmost of our sober inquiries and humble speculations. Therefore, to create heavenly mysteries, like the pretended *Areopagite*, to squeeze them out of single letters, or expressions like the *cabalistical Jews*; to vent out our own fancies for mysteries, or to cover plain and sober truths with *raw and uncouth terms*, that they may put on the vizard of being mysterious, is to forsake the word, and to give up ourselves to the conduct of our own imaginations. On the other hand a neglect and contempt of clear, *open revelations*, because the things revealed are mysterious, is that poison which secretly influenceth many amongst ourselves to an open contempt of the most important gospel truths. They will not indeed declare them to be false, but they judge that they should be let alone, as things no to be understood.

§6. *Obs.* 2. It is necessary for the ministers of the gospel sometimes to insist on the most abstruse and difficult truths that are revealed for our edification. The apostle doth not only insist upon the sacerdotal office of Christ, but also judgeth it necessary to explain the mystical prefiguration of it in the priesthood of Melchisedec. Why might not that have been

omitted, seeing he expressly acknowledgeth that the things concerning it were difficult, and the doctrine be taught without it? Is not this a needless curiosity, rather amusing and perplexing, than tending to edification? No; and to direct our duty in this matter, we may consider,

(1.) That it ought to be the design of every faithful minister, in the course of his ministry, to withhold nothing from those committed to his charge that belongs to their edification; but to declare to them the whole counsel of God, so far as he himself hath attained, Acts xx, 20—27.

(2.) That his duty is, as much as in him lieth, to carry on his hearers to perfection, chap. vi, 1. For the ministry itself being given to the church for the perfecting of the saints, Ephes. iv, 12, 13, or the bringing of them all to a perfect man in Christ Jesus, every one who is faithful in that office, ought to make it his design and work.

(3.) But whereas the greatest part of our congregations, it may be, are frequently such as stand in need of milk, and are not skilful as yet in the word of righteousness; it is our duty also to insist on those plainer truths, which *are* suited to their edification.

§7. Those who are called by the state of their flocks to engage sometimes in the exposition of abstruse and mysterious passages, may do well to observe the ensuing rules; all which may be evidently gathered from the manner of our apostle's treating concerning Melchisedec and his office.

1. That their interpretations be openly and evidently conformable to the *analogy of faith*.

2. That the things contained in them do belong to some important truth plainly declared, for the substance of it, in other places. Thus our apostle doth

not designedly, for its own sake, choose out that mysterious passage about Melchisedec. But whereas he was engaged about the priesthood of Christ, he taketh it in, as what would add *light* and *argument* to the truth he had in hand. And herein consists our greatest wisdom in treating of such places, *viz.* when we can reduce them justly to that proper *head* of doctrine to which they belong; which is our sure guide in their interpretation. To choose out such places for our subject to speak on *separately*, and to make them the *sole basis* of our discourse, may have somewhat of an unwarrantable curiosity.

3. When they offer themselves in the course of our ministry, and where God gives light into the sense of the Holy Ghost in them, they are not to be *waved*, as we would be esteemed faithful in our work.

4. Always to remember that which is abstrusely expressed, is so on purpose; for the exercise of our faith, humility, and subjection of mind to the authority of the Holy Ghost; and of our diligence and dependence on him for instruction.

5. That the difficulty and necessity of treating concerning such things be intimated to them who are to be instructed, that so they may be prepared to attend with diligence, and judge with sobriety, of what is delivered.

§8. *Obs. 3.* It is men's slothfulness in hearing that is the sole cause of their not improving the means of grace, or thriving under the dispensation of the word. Or, all our miscarriages, with respect to the gospel, are to be resolved into our own sloth, negligence, and depraved affections. For it is not any one particular fault in hearing, that the apostle reproveth, but the want in general of such an attendance to the word as to be edified thereby, proceeding from corrupt affec-

tions and neglect of duty. Three things in this sense concur to the duty intended;—What is *preparatory* thereunto:—*Actual* hearing or attendance on the word preached:—What is afterwards required to render our hearing useful and effectual.

First, we may consider what is necessary by way of *preparation*, that we be not slothful hearers. The scripture doth not draw up so heavy a charge against any one cause of *unprofitable hearing*, as it doth against the cares and love of the world. God himself gives this reason, why a professing people profited not by the word; “because their hearts went after their covetousness,” Ezek. xxxiii, 31. The prophet preached, and the people sat diligently before him, but their minds being prepossessed with the love of the world, the word to them was of no use. Where men are over-diligent about these things, they certainly deceive themselves, if they suppose they are not slothful in hearing. Covetousness, the apostle tells us, is idolatry, Col. iii, 5, and the covetous hearts of men do never worship the idol of this world with so much devotion, as when they set it up under the preaching of the word; for then they actually erect it in the room of God himself. Unless therefore the cares and business of this world are effectually cast out, we shall be (*νοθραι ταις ακοαις*) “dull of hearing,” and fall under the guilt of what is here reprovèd.

Again; the *end* which we propose to ourselves in hearing, hath a great influence towards regulating the whole duty. Some hear to satisfy their *conviction*, some their *curiosity*, some to *please* themselves, some out of *custom*, some for *company*, and many know not why. It is no wonder such persons be “slothful” and unprofitable hearers. Wherefore, in order to right a discharge of this duty, it is required

of us that we consider what is our spiritual condition, our stature in Christ; how short we are in faith, knowledge, light, and love, compared with what we ought to be. To supply us with this *growth*, the preaching of the word is appointed of God as *food* for our souls; and we shall never receive it aright, unless we *desire* it, and long for it, to this *end*.

Moreover; when the mind is filled with things of another nature, there is no room into which the "seed of the word" may have admission, Jam. i, 21. "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word." If the one be not done, the other will not follow. If filthiness and a superfluity of naughtiness be not thrust from the mind, the word will not be received, at least not with meekness, seeing it will be sure to wander after its idols. For men's minds filled with their lusts, are like Ezekiel's "chambers of imagery," containing all manner of representations pourtrayed on the wall; which way soever they turned their eyes, they had idolatrous objects to entertain them, chap. viii, 10—12. Such pictures do the corrupt imaginations of sensual persons fill their minds with; every thought has an object ready for its entertainment, effectually diverting the soul from the word of truth.

§9. *Secondly*; in the *act* of hearing itself, there are sundry things required of them who would not incur the guilt of the crime reprov'd. As—a due *reverence of the word* for its own sake. Spiritual reverence is, our humble religious respect of any thing on account of its authority and holiness; and is due to every thing that God hath put his name upon.

Whereas, therefore, God hath magnified his word above all his name, Psal. cxxxviii, 2. Or every ordi-

nance whereby he reveals himself to us, it is due to it in a special manner.

It may be objected that his reverence is due only to the word as written, which is purely and wholly the word of God; but not to it as *preached* by men, wherein there is a mixture of human infirmities.

We reply; God hath been pleased to ordain, that the word should be dispensed to us by weak sinful men like ourselves, whence it unavoidably follows, that they may, and probably sometimes will, mix some of their infirmities with their work. To expect perfection therefore in this case, is to except against the wisdom of God, and that special order which he hath designed for his own glory, 2 Cor. iv, 7. In a pipe which conveys water into an house there may be such a flaw as will sometimes admit some dust or earth to mix itself with the water; will you therefore reject the water itself, and say, that if you may not have it just as it riseth in the fountains, you will not regard it, when you live far from the fountain itself, and can have no water but what is conveyed in pipes liable to such defects? Here lies the proper exercise of our spiritual understanding in the gospel, whereby we are enabled to "try all things, and hold fast that which is good." To this end the apostle requires that we should have our senses exercised to try both good and evil. Hereby, according to our duty, we separate the chaff from the wheat. This consideration ought to keep us in a constant dependence on, and prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ for his Spirit to lead us, according to his promise, into all truth; which is the great reserve he hath given us in this matter.

And hence follows an immediate *subjection of soul and conscience* to whatever is delivered in the dispensation of the word. When we are not in this frame, we

shall be unprofitable hearers; for the immediate end of our hearing is practice. Herein then lies the great wisdom of faith in hearing,—in *delivering up* the soul and conscience to the commanding authority of God in the word, Rom. vi, 17. And to this end it is required, among other things, that the heart have no *approved reserve* for any lust, whose life it would save from the sword of the word; that we be *afraid of no duty*, on account of the difficulties and dangers with which it may be attended; that we be diligent and watchful against spiritual *distractions*, especially such as are growing to be *habitual*.

§10. *Thirdly*; there are duties also consequential to actual hearing; as, a due *examination* of what was new or doubtful in the things delivered to us. When the gospel itself was first preached to the Bereans, it being *new* to them, they are recommended for examining it by the scriptures which they had before received, Acts xvii, 11. And we are commanded “to try all things, and to hold fast that which is good,” 1 Thes, v, 21. As also to “try the spirits,” 1 John iv, 1, or what is taught under pretence of any spiritual gift whatever. Not that any thing is spoken to encourage that cavilling humor which will be excepting and disputing against every thing. Neither ought what is delivered by any faithful minister of the gospel, whose way and doctrine have been known, to be lightly called into question; nor, without manifest evidence of mistake, be made the matter of doubtful disputations; else it will prove the bane of all profitable hearing. The apostle complains of some who are “always learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth,” 2 Tim. iii, 7. Of this sort are many still among us; and hence it is, that after they have been long under the means of the most valuable instruc-

tion, they are greedy to embrace any fancy that offers. The reason is, they did not *truly learn* what they were so long in learning. To learn any truth as we ought, is to learn it in its proper principles, true nature, and peculiar use; so to learn it, as to get an experience of its usefulness in a life of holy obedience. That we learn *doctrinally*, what respect every truth hath to Christ, the centre of them all; *practically*, what influence they have upon our holiness and obedience.

§11. The remaining observations are:

1. Many who receive the word at first with some readiness, do yet afterwards make but slow progress either in knowledge or grace.

2. It is a grievous matter to the dispensers of the gospel, to find their hearers unapt to learn and thrive under their ministry through negligence and sloth. The apostle complaineth of it here as a cause of sorrow; and so it is to all *faithful ministers*, whose lot it is to have such hearers. As for others, who are *themselves* negligent or slothful in their work, they will be of course regardless of the state of their flock.

VERSES 12, 13, 14.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

§1—7. (I.) Exposition of the words. §8. (II.) Observations. 1. The time of hearing the gospel must be particularly accounted for. §9. 2. Churches are the schools of Christ §10. 3. Gospel ministers should endeavor to bring on their hearers to be able to instruct others. §11. 4. The holy scriptures should be regarded as the oracles of God. §12. 5. The scriptures contain

first principles to facilitate our instruction. §13. 6. Also provisions of truth for all Christians. §14. 7. The gospel is the only word of righteousness. §15, 16. 8. God requires we should be skilful in the word. §17. 9. The word of the gospel is food for souls. §18. 10. It is a sign of thriving when any have a regular appetite for gospel mysteries. §19. Other observations.

§1. (I.) **A**s these three verses all treat of the same matter with that foregoing, so they have all the same design in themselves, and cannot be severed in their exposition. The intention of the apostle is to represent to the Hebrews herein their true state; arising from their being dull in hearing. He shews that they were yet *babes, unskilful* in the word of righteousness, and such as had need to be fed with *milk*.

The first thing is an aggravation of the fault re-
proved; (*δια του χρόνου, pro ratione temporis*) "considering the time" and season you Hebrews have had, you might have been otherwise long ago: or it may not intend the *space* of time, but the *nature* of the season which they were under. There is no inconvenience in this sense, and it hath good instruction in it; but I will rather adhere to that which is more commonly received. (*Δια του χρόνου*) *for the time*, is as much as "with respect to the time past and gone" since their first calling, and profession of the gospel. But it may happen that men may have time enough, and have no advantage by it for want of other necessary helps. Wherefore it is supposed, that during the time intended, these Hebrews wanted no necessary means of instruction. They had for a season the ministry of all the apostles, and of several of them for a longer continuance, and it is highly probable they had yet one of them surviving. Moreover, they had in common use the scriptures of the *Old Testament*, which testified to all concerning Christ; and most of the writings of the *New Testament* were before this time commu-

nicated to them. Wherefore during the season intended, they enjoyed sufficient means of "growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

§2. (Οφειλοντες ειναι—διδασκαλοι) "You ought to have been teachers." This is the word (διδασκαλος) whereby the writers of the New Testament express *Rabbi*, which was the usual name of the public teachers of the law among the Jews. He is such a one as—not only is fit to teach, but also—hath disciples learning from him. And it is the name of the teaching officer in the church, 1 Cor. xii, 28, Ephes. iv, 11.

(Οφειλουντες ειναι) *You ought to be*; he doth not only say, that they had enjoyed such opportunities of instruction, as that they might have been able to teach and instruct others; but this he declares was expected from them as their duty. Every church was then a *seminary*, wherein provision was made, not only for the continuation of gospel preaching in itself, but also for the gathering and teaching of other churches. When therefore a church was first planted by the ministry of the apostles, it was for a while continued under their own immediate care; and then usually committed by them to the ministry of some *evangelists*, until some among themselves were found meet to be made overseers and instructors of the rest, 2 Tim. ii, 2; Acts xiv, 23, Tit. i, 5. Upon their decease, others were to be chosen by the church from among themselves to the same work. And thus was the preservation of the churches provided for; it being suited to the nature of all societies, as also to the institution and love of Christ to his churches, that they should be able to preserve their being and order. And this also was the manner before in the synagogues of the Jews.

But they did not only learn in the church, that they might be able afterwards to teach in the *same*, but

also that they might be instrumental in the work of the gospel in *other places*. Thus, in those days, what is here referred to might be the duty of many, especially in that church of the Hebrews; for this was the great *seminary* of preachers for the whole world at that time,—the law was to go forth from Zion, and healing waters from Jerusalem. It was in the synagogues of the Jews, throughout their dispersions in the world, that the preachers of the gospel began to divulge their message; for God had so ordained; that, in all places, the accomplishment of the promise made to their fathers should be first declared to them, Acts xiii, 32, 33, 46. Now this could not be done but by Jews; for the Gentile converts, being uncircumcised, could have no access, either to themselves or their synagogues. On this account, it was greatly incumbent on these Hebrews to thrive in knowledge, that they might be able to “teach” others, when God in his providence should call them to it.

§3. The second branch of the apostolic reproof consists in a declaration of the effect of their negligence: “You have need that one should teach you again; which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” (*Χρειαν ἐχετε*) “You have need;” if you are not thus taught again, you will not know the principles of the oracles of God. We are said to need these things naturally, without which we cannot well live, Mat. vi, 8, and, morally, without which we cannot perform our duty.

(*Τὸ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς*) “That one should teach you.”—It is thus fallen out by your negligence, that, instead of being teachers of others, of being masters of the assemblies, you had need to be placed in the *lowest form* of those who learn; the highest evidence of your dullness and want of proficiency,

(*Τινὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα*) "*Which be the first principles*"—not only which they are, but what they are; the very nature of the things themselves is intended. The word (*στοιχεῖον*) is used by our apostle indifferently, in a good or bad sense, according as its adjuncts require; frequently he applies it to the principles and rudiments of the Jewish religion, or Mosaical institutions, Gal. iv, 3. Nor doth he at any time make use of this word, but when he treateth with either the Jews themselves or those that judaized. The term plurally (*στοιχεῖα*) denotes the "first principles" of any art or science, as the letters of the alphabet are the (*στοιχεῖα*) *principles*, rudiments, elements of reading.

(*Τῶν λόγιων τὰ Θεοῦ*) "*Of the oracles of God.*" The *scriptures*, usually called so in the New, when applied to those of the Old Testament, Acts vii, 38, "*oracles*," because they were given out from God by inspiration, 2 Tim. iii, 16; 2 Pet. i, 21.

The use and main end of these "institutions," as declared in the "oracles of God," were to typify Jesus Christ. This was the first thing that the Jews were to learn in them, and in which the Hebrews were so deficient, that they had need to be taught them again.

§4. "And are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat." This allusion the apostle pursues to the end of the chapter. (*Γεγοναυτε*) "*Ye are become*"—the word may be taken in a two-fold sense: it may signify,—it appears what you are, and what you stand in need of; upon trial it is made manifest how dull and slothful you have been, how ignorant you are, and how little you have improved your season. Or, it may be, the apostle by this expression denotes a declension in them; "*You are become*," that is, *now*, what formerly you were not. So CHRYSOSTOM on the place: "This is what you have now brought

yourselves to." This is no unusual thing among professors. Through their inadvertency, sinful negligence, and worldly mindedness, they lose the knowledge they had attained; and on a perverse continuance in such an evil course, through the righteous judgment of God, even all they seemed to have, is taken from them. "*You have need of milk.*" the whole word of God is, it may be, sometimes compared to milk; because of its freedom from corrupt mixtures, and fitness for nourishment, 1 Pet. ii, 2, "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*" Nothing is of a more natural nourishment than milk; and is never hurtful, but where the body is prepossessed with obstructions. And it denotes those plain doctrines of truth, which were meet for them who, as yet, were not capable of higher mysteries. So our apostle useth the same similitude, 1 Cor. iii, 1, 2. "*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*" Such doctrines of truth as he calls the "*first principles of the oracles of God,*" plain and fundamental truths. The greatest part of his epistles is taken up with the deepest mysteries of the will and counsel of God; and for this cause he is now by some reflected as a person, whose writings are obscure, and hardly to be understood; for men begin not to fear to cast the shame and guilt of their own ignorance on a pretended obscurity in his writings. Thus these Hebrews had need of milk; not through the tenderness of their constitution, but by having contracted an ill habit of mind.

They had *not need of strong meat*. He alludes to the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ: these are solid meat to the souls of sound believers. And hereby Christians may take a due estimate of their spiritual health, strength, and growth. If the solid doctrines concerning the *offices* of Christ, especially his priesthood and sacrifice, are suited to their minds and affections, and afford spiritual nourishment, it is a good evidence of their progress in the knowledge of Christ and the gospel.

§5. (Πας ὁ μετέχων γαλακτος, *quisquis lacte participatur*) "Every one of them who, by reason of their infirm state, ought to be fed with milk," is (ἀπειρος, *rudis, inexpertus*) *unskilful*, say we; properly one that hath *no experience* (λογὴ δικαιοσύνης) "*of the word of righteousness*," or doctrine of the gospel. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed to us; Rom. i, 17. even Christ as the end of the law of righteousness; Rom. x, 4. And so alone declares the way of righteousness. Now these Hebrews are not said to be utterly ignorant, but only to be "unskilful," especially in the great mysteries of it; they had not attained to a clear understanding of the gospel truths, so as to improve them to their proper ends; or they had not experience in themselves of their proper power and reality. The general reason is (νήπιος γὰρ ἐστὶ) "seeing he is but a babe." He intends therefore in the former words, not such as use milk occasionally, but such as feed on *milk only*; such as through sloth and negligence have made little or no proficiency in spiritual knowledge, and are not capable of instruction in the more heavenly mysteries of the gospel.

§6. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are (τέλειοι, as opposed to νήπιοι) *adult*," come to full age. So our apostle makes the opposition, Ephes. iv, 13, 14, He would have us come (εἰς ἀνδρα τέλειον) to a per-

fect man; that we should be no more (νηπιοι) *children*, tossed up and down. As the one therefore denotes persons weak, ignorant, and unstable in spiritual things; so the other does those who have their understandings enlarged, and their minds settled, in the knowledge of Christ, and the mysteries of the gospel. Hence also, when any grace is raised to a constant sincere exercise, it is said to be perfect, 1 John iv, 18.

§7. This allusion is still continued between *infants* and *adults*. Infants have all their (αισθητηρια, *sensuum organa*) the organs of the external senses; eyes, ears, and the like: and they have their internal sense in its principle. But they know not how to use either to advantage. They cannot by their taste distinguish between wholesome food and that which is pernicious. The "senses intended, are the necessary faculties for understanding and judging of spiritual things. And these abilities in their several degrees, are in both sorts—"babes," and "those of full age;" but here lies the difference, in those of "full age," these senses are (γεγυμνασμενα) *exercised*; the word doth not denote an *actual exercise*, but that readiness, ability, and fitness for any thing which is attained by assiduous exercise. As a soldier who is trained, is ready for his duty; or a wrestler for prizes (whence the allusion is taken) to encounter his antagonist. Wherefore to have our "senses exercised," intends—to have our minds through sedulous meditation, prayer, hearing the word, and the like, to become ready and able to receive spiritual truths, and to turn them into nourishment for our souls. (Προς διακρισιν καλο τε και κακου) "to the discerning of good and evil." The word (διακρισις) imports an *exact judgment*, putting a difference between the different natures of things; and here it is said to be exercised about "good and evil." The same allusion he still carries on. Of

food, some *wholesome* and some is *hurtful*; the one is *good*, the other *evil*. That may be proposed to us, as taken from the scripture, which indeed is not so, and which is not wholesome food, but mere *poison* to the souls of men. To avoid these dangers; it is necessary that we have our "senses exercised" (*δια τῆς ἐκείνου*) "by reason of use." The word (*ἐκείνου*) signifies an *habit*; which is a firmly rooted disposition, giving readiness and facility in acts about its proper object. And the apostle intending such an habit as is acquired by use and exercise, we render it use. The first principle of spiritual light is infused by the Holy Ghost; its improvement into a fixed habit, is by constant and continual exercise about the mysteries of the gospel.

§8. (II.) *Obs.* 1. The time wherein we enjoy the great privilege of having the gospel dispensed to us, must, as a precious talent, be particularly accounted for. It was expected from these Hebrews, that they should grow and thrive in knowledge and holiness proportionably to their time and means; and not doing so, it is charged on them as a great aggravation of their guilt. And we all may do well to consider it. See Exposition on chap. iii, 13, 15.

§9. *Obs.* 2. Churches are the schools of Christ, wherein his disciples are trained up to perfection, every one according to his appointed measure, and his usefulness in the body. Every one that belongs to it, ought to have a double aim; first, his own edification, and then his usefulness in respect of others. The church is the garden of Christ enclosed and watered, and every plant which continueth in a withering, unthrifty condition, will at length be plucked up and cast out. We are so to learn in the church as to become useful to others; a matter which few trouble themselves about. But this Christ expects from us

all. One way or other, every one may contribute to this building; all may cast into this treasury, some their talents, and some their mites. They who have not flocks to watch over, may yet have families, relations, children, servants, &c. who may be benefited by their knowledge. It may not be the duty of every one to convince gainsayers, but it is incumbent on all to be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear," 1 Pet. iii, 15. It is a sad condition, when a person can return no tolerable answer to that inquiry; "of what use are you in the church of Christ?"

§10. *Obs. 3.* It is the duty of gospel ministers to endeavor after their hearers' increase in knowledge; until they also, according to their calls and opportunities, are able to instruct others. Some, it may be, are apt to fear lest their hearers should know too much. Even good men had need to watch against discomposures of mind; when they find on trial, perhaps, that some of their hearers are, like David, wiser in the things of God than their teachers. And Joshua himself was earnest with Moses to forbid Elad and Medad from prophesying out of no good frame, as appeareth by the reply of Moses; "Enviest thou for my sake?" He then adds this truly benevolent wish: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." In reality, a faithful minister has a very great cause of rejoicing, when instrumental so to carry on any of his hearers towards perfection, as that their gifts and abilities may out-shine his own, especially if they are accompanied with humility and holiness.

§11. *Obs. 4.* That the holy scriptures are to be consulted and submitted to, as the oracles of God. Not a dead letter, but the life-giving oracles, by which

God conveys a living power to the souls of men, and in which he still speaks to us. So with Stephen: Moses "received the living oracles to give unto us;" not to our fathers only, who lived in those days, but to us also, now so many generations after. They are the oracles of that God who is the first truth, whose being is truth, and who therefore cannot lie.

§12: 66. 5. God hath in infinite love and wisdom so disposed of his word, as that there are first principles plain and necessary, laid down in it, to facilitate our instruction. Men have found it necessary in teaching all arts and sciences, first to lay down general principles, which they make the basis of all their following deductions. Thus being what the present exigence of our nature requires, accordingly there are "first principles of the oracles of God." And this is necessarily required to the nature of first principles; they must be *notoria*, plainly declared, or else they are very unmeet to be the first principles of knowledge in any kind. The mind of man being *duly* *in-laid* with these first principles, it is inconceivable how they may thrive in the knowledge of the deepest mysteries. But he that lays the foundation of an house, and neglects carrying on the building, will find but a sorry shelter in a storm. Again, first principles are such as, without which, and if the mind be not duly possessed with them, all endeavors after higher attainments are preposterous, and will undoubtedly prove fruitless. Those who aim at *abstract speculations* without these principles, are either always learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth, wearying themselves in search of what they cannot comprehend; or else, are vainly puffed up in their fleshy minds, upon a presumption that they know some marvellous thing beyond the common rate of other men; when at the

same thing, in reality, they know nothing as they ought to know, nothing with respect to its proper principles. Hence it is that multitudes are so easily seduced to foolish and destructive errors. Things are proposed to them under specious pretences, which at first seem to have somewhat excellent and pious, and as far as they can discern, are of no evil tendency; but after they have embraced them and are brought under their power, it is found that they have virtually renounced the foundation of the gospel. Moreover, these principles are such as insure salvation, though they alone are known and obeyed, provided man's progress in knowledge be not obstructed by their own fault. And as this consideration will not give the least continuance to the sloth or negligence of any; so it is a relief to them who are not supplied with the means of higher improvement.

§15. Obs. 6. There are provisions of truth in the scripture, suitable to the spiritual instruction and edification of all sorts of persons that belong to Jesus Christ. There is in it both milk and strong meat. The disciples of Christ ever were, and ever will be in this world, of several sizes and capacities. In the house of God there are all sorts of vessels, smaller and greater, cups and flagons; Isa. xlii, 24. There are in the church, babes, young men, and fathers, 1 John ii; and there are among the hearers of the gospel, persons sound, healthy, and thriving; and those that are weak, sickly, and feeble; as in the same flock there are lambs, and sheep, and ewes great with young. Now in an house where these dwell together, old men, and strong men, and children, or babes; those that are healthy, and those that are sick; if they should be all confined to the same diet, some of them must necessarily perish. But a wise household.

er will provide for them differently; according to their several states and capacities, that which shall be wholesome and convenient for them all; wherefore, hence it will follow in general;

(1.) That it is the wisdom of the dispensers of the gospel to consider what doctrines are most suitable to the capacity and condition of their hearers. And in particular,

(2.) That it is a preposterous and unprofitable course to endeavor to instruct any in the greater mysteries of the gospel, who have not as yet been well grounded in the more common and obvious principles of it.

§14. *Obs. 7.* The gospel is the only word of righteousness in itself and to us. The declaration of the righteousness of God which remains in the *law*, however pure and holy in itself, tends not to beget in us righteousness and peace.

Again, the gospel is the word of righteousness *declaratively*, because it alone reveals to us, what righteousness God requireth in us, and will accept from us. This is the great inquiry of mankind not utterly hardened in sin; that is, who are not half way in hell already—what they will do for a righteousness wherewith to appear before God? It must answer the demands of justice, or it will not avail us. Here mankind, left to themselves, would wander everlastingly until they were swallowed up in eternal ruin. And a thousand paths have they been tracing to this purpose. But here the gospel ariseth as the *sun in its brightness*, dispelling all darkness and mists, and evidently declares a righteousness satisfactory to all the wants of the soul—the righteousness of Christ; what he did and suffered in our stead. This is declared in the gospel *alone*, and indeed the whole gospel is nothing but the

declaration of it in its nature, causes, effects, and consequences: hence principally is the gospel called a "word of righteousness." The doctrine of the gospel is universally a doctrine of *holiness and righteousness*, allowing not the least criminal indulgence, but severely condemning the inmost disorders of the heart, as well as the outward perpetration of actual sin. See Tit. ii, 11, 12. And there is no more required of us in this world, but that our conversation be "*such as becometh the gospel.*" To all which we may add, that it is the instrument of communicating righteousness to us, or of making us righteous.

§15. *Obs. 8.* That God requires of all those who live under the dispensation of the gospel, that they should be "*skilful*" in the word of righteousness. To know the nature of this duty, we must consider what are those *ends of the gospel*, with respect to which it is required of us, that we be able skilfully to use and improve the truths of it. I shall name only three of them.

(1.) The increase and establishment of our *faith*. Christ is the peculiar, immediate, and proper object of faith; herein therefore consists our skill in the word of righteousness in readily and duly applying by faith the doctrine and promises concerning Christ and his mediation. The great way of preserving our faith in the assaults of Satan is to have in a readiness some suitable and seasonable divine word; then will faith be able to hold up its shield; whereby the fiery darts of Satan will be quenched. There is a peculiar *antidote* in the scripture against the poison of every temptation. Again; hereby alone is faith secured against the cunning craft of men that lie in wait to deceive. The scripture is like the tower of David "built for an armory, wherein there hang a thousand

bucklers, all shields of mighty men." There are weapons in abundance prepared for the defence of faith, if we are but ready and dexterous in managing them. If men be but skilful and ready in the scriptures, though destitute of other learning, it is inexpressible how able they will be to confound the sophistries of the most subtle adversaries of the truth. But without this ability, men stand ready to be seized on as a prey by the next seducer.

(2.) Another end for which we need this skill is, our guidance in the whole course of our duties, that we be not out of our way, nor at a loss about it. The word is our rule, our guide, our light in all our walking before God; but if we have not an acquaintance with it, if we are not ready to use and apply it, we shall never walk steadily nor uprightly. Where men are unskilful in the word, particular difficulties either entangle them, and fill them with perplexities, so that they know not what to do; or else (like undisciplined soldiers) they violently and presumptuously break through them, to the wounding of their consciences, and the hardening of their spirits against a sense of sin. Another end is,

(3.) *Consolation* in distress. It is unavoidable that we must be left to darkness and sorrow, or must betake ourselves to reliefs that are worse than our troubles, if we have not in readiness those *grounds of solid consolation* which the scripture is stored with. But whatever these sorrows or troubles are, if we are "skilful in the word of righteousness," we may at all times and places, in prisons, dungeons, or exiles, have wherewith to support and refresh our souls.

§16. Again the word signifies "*want if experience.*" Now by this "experience," I intend, a spiritual sense, taste, or relish of the goodness, sweetness, useful excel-

lency of gospel truths, endearing our hearts to God, and causing us to adhere to him with delight and constancy. And this experience, which is of so great use and advantage, consists of three things:

1. A thorough *mixture of the promises with faith*. It is that lively acting of faith which the scripture expresseth by tasting, eating, drinking, which gives a real incorporation of the things we are made partakers of. When faith assiduously acts upon the promises, so that the mind is filled with their contents, (and the mind will be influenced by every object it is *filled* with) then the foundation of this experience is laid. This the apostle intends, Eph. iii, 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Faith by its frequent lively actings on Christ, brings him as it were, to make a constant residence in the heart, where he always puts forth his power, and the efficacy of his grace. It consists moreover,

2. In a *spiritual sense* of the excellency of the things believed, wherewith the affections are touched and filled. No tongue can express that satisfaction which the soul receives in the gracious communication of a sense of divine goodness, in Christ, when it "rejoiceth with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The love, delight, and joys of the experienced Christian have their root within,—in those actings of faith before described. They are the fruits and flowers of it, which may be *excited* by external occasions, but *proceed* from the internal root of faith. Once more this experience consists,

3. In *experiments* of the power of the word, on all occasions, especially, as it is "a word of righteousness." It gives *peace with God*. This is the most difficult thing in the world, to be impressed on the mind of man really and seriously convinced of the guilt of sin;

and all attempts, independent of the divine prescription, utterly fail. But when the soul doth really close with the gospel plan, when it "*mixeth it with faith*" as a word of righteousness," the authority of the word in the conscience prevails, and the believer's peace is firm and stable. It satisfies the heart in its preferring spiritual, invisible, and eternal things before those that are present. When we are satisfied that it is good for us, that it is best for us, to forego present earthly things, for those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, merely on the authority of *the word*, testifying to the excellency and certainty of these invisible things; then we have an experiment of its divine power.

§17. *Obs. 9.* The word of the gospel, in the dispensation of it, is "*food*" provided for the souls of men. There is a new spiritual life wrought in all that believe—the life by virtue, of which, they live to God. The *outward means* of communicating this life is the word of the gospel, 1 Pet. i, 23, and God takes care to *preserve* it. Now as every thing is increased by the same means whereby it is ingenerated, the food God prepareth for this new creature is his *word*, 1 Pet. ii, 1—3. Hence wherever God will have a church there he will preserve his word. And where he absolutely takes this away he hath no more family, no more church. So when the woman through the persecution of the dragon, was driven into the wilderness, in an obscure distressed condition, God took care that there she should be *fed*, Rev. xii, 6. He will never suffer this heavenly provision to be so removed from any that are truly his, but that a diligent hand shall find *bread* enough. Hence,

(1.) No judgment is so to be feared and deprecated, as being deprived of the "*dispensation of the word.*"

No judgment is like famine. "They that are slain with the sword, are better than they that are slain with hunger; for these pine away stricken through for want of the fruit of the field," Lam. iv, 9. And no famine like that of the word, which God threateneth as the sorest of his judgments, Amos viii, 11.

(2.) As no temporal mercy is so liable to be abused, as *fulness of bread*; which joined with *pride* and *idleness*, its usual companions, produced the sins of Sodom; Ezek xvi, 49. So is it with the *fulness of this spiritual food*; spiritual *pride* and spiritual *sloth* are apt to grow up with it, to corrupt and abuse it. Some are apparently proud and delicate, waxing wanton under their enjoyments, so that *wholesome food* is despised by them; nothing will serve them but some poisonous dainties. And some are slothful, thinking all pains and charge about the word too much—though the word of eternal life. The curiosity and sloth of these days bode no good.

(3.) Those who, by any means, endeavor to obstruct the dispensation of the word, do their endeavor to *famish* the souls of men. They keep their "food" from them, without which they cannot live. Whether this be done by negligence, ignorance, or disability in those who take upon them to be God's stewards, but have none of his provision under their disposal; or whether it be done out of a real hatred to the word; the cruelty is dreadful, and the crime will be avenged.

(4.) The word is to be esteemed and sought after, as our *daily food*. Negligence and carelessness about the food of our souls are too great an evidence that there is no principle of life in us. Think not too much about your pains.

§18. *Obs.* 10. It is an evidence of a thriving and healthy state of soul, to have an *appetite* to the deep-

est mysteries of the gospel, or most solid doctrines of truth, and to be able profitably to digest them. Whereas if you take others beyond *milk*, or first principles, ordinarily they are at a loss, and very little benefited by any provision you can make for them. But yet sometimes it falls out in these *spiritual*, as it doth in natural things. Some persons under distempers, having a false appetite, and their taste vitiated, greatly desire strong food, which is no way meet for them, and which, when they have eaten it, doth but heighten their distemper. That we may not be deceived, nor deceive ourselves in this matter, I shall give some differences between this property of thriving, healthy souls, and the inordinate longing of spiritually sick and distempered minds, after those things which are not meet for them.

(1.) The desires of the former are kept always within the bounds of what is plainly revealed in the *written* word; they have learned in all things to think *soberly*, "according to the analogy of faith." Rom. xii, 8. As for the other sort,—if any thing be new, curious, seemingly mystical, removed from the common sense and apprehensions of Christians without any due consideration whether it be a truth of God or no, are sure instantly to run greedily after it, and catch at the empty cloud.

(2.) The one, upon discovering any important mystery of the gospel, are greatly taken up with an *holy admiration* and reverence of God, whose these things are; the other sort satisfy themselves in their own *speculation*, without being much affected about the greatness and glory of God in the things which they imagine they know.

(3.) The former sort find real food and nourishment in this strong meat, so that their faith is strength-

ened, their love increased and holiness promoted in their souls by them; the others, whose desires proceed from the distempers of *pride and curiosity*, find none of these things. Hence it is, that we hardly ever see one of these *notional* persons either fruitful in themselves, or useful to others; neither can they bear that part of the *yoke* of Christ, which makes necessary the constant exercise of faith and love.

(4.) The former are always more and more *humbled*, the latter more and more puffed up by their fancied attainments, Col, ii, 18.

§19. To the foregoing observations we may add,

1. The assiduous exercise of our minds about spiritual things, in a spiritual manner, is the only means to make us profit in hearing the word. When our spiritual *senses are exercised*, by reason of constant *use*, they are properly qualified to embrace and improve what is offered them.

2. The spiritual sense of believers well exercised in the word of truth, is the best help in judging of what is good or evil, what is true or false, when proposed to them.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 1—3.

Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do if God permit.

§1. The subject stated. §2. (I.) The general proposition. §3. (II.) The amplification of it. §4, 5. Repentance from dead works. §6 Faith towards God. §7, 8. The resurrection of the dead. §9, 11. Eternal judgment. §12. The doctrine of baptisms. §13. The imposition of hands. §14. (III.) The apostle's resolution of going on to perfection as before proposed. §15, 25. IV. Observations,

§1. **I**N the first part of this chapter, comprised in the three first verses, there are three things considera-

ble:—A general *proposition*, containing the apostle's resolution to proceed to the more perfect doctrines of the gospel, and his passing over the first principles of Christianity:—an *amplification* of this proposition:—and a *renovation* of his resolution, with submission to the divine pleasure.

§2. (I.) The general proposition is; “therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.”

(Διο) *Wherefore*—This illative manifests that there is a dependence in what ensues, or what was discoursed on before; and that which follows may be either an *inference* from it, or be the *effect of resolution* occasioned by it; either this duty will hence follow, or seeing it is so, I am thus resolved to do. If the words be taken the former way, they declare his resolution *in teaching*; if in the latter, their *duty in learning*. It may be the apostle intends both; that he should proceed to their farther instruction, and that they should stir up themselves to profit accordingly. (Αφενης) *we leaving*; *omitting* those discourses; laying aside farther speech concerning these things. But it deserves particular notice, that the signification of the word is to be limited to the present occasion. For consider the things here spoken of absolutely, and they are *never* to be *left* either by teachers or hearers. There is a necessity that teachers should often insist on the rudiments, or first principles of religion; not only with respect to them who are continually to be trained up in knowledge from their infancy, but also those who have made a farther progress in knowledge. And this course we find our apostle to have steered in all his epistles. Nor are any hearers so to leave these principles as to forget them, or not duly to make use of them. Cast aside a constant regard to

them, in their proper place, and no progress can be made in knowledge, no more than a building can be carried on when the foundation is taken away. Respect therefore is had on the side of teachers and hearers, to the *present occasion*.

Let us not *always dwell* upon the teaching and learning of these things, but, *omitting them for a season*, as what you are, or might be, well acquainted with, let us proceed to what is further necessary for you.

That which is "passed over" here he calls, (τον της αρχης τε Χριστολογον) "*the word of the beginning of Christ.*" The *word of Christ* is no other but the doctrine of the gospel, as preached and taught. The limitation (της αρχης) "*of the beginning,*" respect those parts of the Christian doctrine, which men were usually and properly first instructed in; and which he immediately enumerates. They are the same with the "*first principles of the oracles of God,*" whereof mention was made before.

The end is (τη τελειοτης) *perfection*; that is, such a knowledge of the mysteries and sublime doctrines of the gospel, as those who were completely initiated, and thoroughly instructed, were partakers of, 1 Cor. ii, 6. "We speak wisdom among the *perfect*;" or declare the mysteries of the gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, to them that are *capable* of them. It is a comparative, not an absolute perfection, for the latter is not attainable in this life. Take therefore the "*perfection*" here aimed at, *objectively*, and it is the more sublime mysteries of the gospel; take it *subjectively*, it is such a clear preception of them, especially of those which concern the person and offices of Christ, and particularly his priesthood, as *grown believers* do usually attain to.

The manner of arriving at this end, he expresseth by (Φαρημεθα) "*let us be carried on.*" The word is emphatical, intimating such a kind of progress as a ship makes when it is under sail. "Let us be carried on" with the full bent of our minds and affections, with the utmost endeavors of our whole souls. We have abode long enough by the shore; let us now hoist our sails, and launch forth into the deep.

§3. (II.) Now follows the amplification: "Not laying again the foundation of repentance," &c. The word (θεμελιος) *foundation*, includes an allusion to an architect and his building. First he lays the "foundation;" and he is a foolish builder who either doth not lay a good one, or rests therein, or who is always setting it up and pulling it down, without making progress. Indeed that foundation, which hath not an edifice erected on it, is no foundation; for that which is materially so, becomes so formally only with respect to the building upon it. And those who receive the doctrines of Christ here called the "foundation," if they build not on them, they will prove none unto *them*, whatever they are in themselves. It is in allusion to a foundation with respect to its first property,—that it is *first laid* in the building, that these doctrines are called the "foundation." And the apostle intends the same things by the three-fold expression which he maketh use of, chap. v, 12. "The first principles of the oracles of God," chap. vi, 1. "The doctrine of the beginning of Christ," and "the foundation." Concerning these things he says; "Not laying again." These things, saith he, you have already been instructed in by others, and therefore, (as also on other considerations) I will not go over them again.

§4. We come next to consider the *particular instances* in their order: and the *first* is (μελανοις απο

μετάνοιαν ἐργασίαν) "repentance from dead works." This was taught in the first place to all those who would give up themselves to the discipline of Christ and the gospel. This expression—"dead works," is peculiar to this epistle. The converts, before their initiation, were instructed in the necessity of forsaking the sins wherein they lived before their conversion, which Peter calls their *old* or *former sins*, 1 Epist. chap. iv, 3. "For the time past of our lives may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." The sins of unregenerate persons, a repentance of which was to be expressed before baptism, are called "*dead works*," in respect of their nature and their end. For as to their *nature*, they proceed from a principle under the power of spiritual death; they are the works of persons "dead in trespasses and sins." And with respect to their *end*, they are (*mortua*) *dead*, because (*mortifera*) *deadly*; they procure death, and end in death. "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death," Jam. i, 15. They proceed from death spiritual, and end in death eternal. On the same account are they called, "unfruitful works of darkness," Ephes. v, 11. They proceed from a principle of spiritual darkness, and end in darkness everlasting. These the primitive converts were taught to abandon and repent of; for it was not then, as now, that any one might be admitted into the *society of the faithful*, and yet continue in open sins unrepented of.

That which is required, with respect to these dead works, is, (*μετάνοια*) *repentance*. This being the first thing required of them who take upon them the profession of the gospel, is consequently the *first principle* of the Christian doctrine as here placed by the

apostle. Without this, whatever else is attempted or attained, it is only a dishonor to Christ, and a disappointment to men. This is the true *method* of preaching, confirmed by the example and command of Christ himself: "Repent and believe the gospel," Matt. iv, 17. Mark i, 15.

§5. But, moreover, we must consider this (*μετάνοια*) *repentance* in its own nature, at least in general: it signifies,

1. A *change of mind*, or an after-consideration and judgment. Men, whilst they live in *dead works*, do never make a right judgment concerning either their nature, their guilt, or their end. Hence are they so often called to *remember* and *consider* things aright, to deal about them with the reason of men; and for want thereof, are said to be foolish, brutish, and to have no understanding. The mind is practically deceived about them. There are *degrees* in this deceit, but all sinners are actually more or less deceived. All impenitent sinners may be reduced to either—such as *despising* their convictions, go on in an unbridled course of licentiousness, as not judging their language worth inquiring into; or,—such as do in some measure attend to them, but yet *practically* they refuse them, and embrace motives to sin which turn the scale on that side, as occasions and temptations occur. Wherefore the first thing in this repentance is a thorough change of the *mind* and *judgment* concerning these *dead works*. The awakened sinner casting out all prejudices, laying aside all pleas, excuses, and palliations, finally concludes that *sin*, all and *every* sin, every thing that hath the *nature* of sin, is universally evil; evil in itself, evil to the sinner, evil in its present effects and future consequences; evil in every

kind, shamefully, incomparably evil. yea, the only thing that deserves the name of evil in the world.

2. It respects the *will* and *affections*. It is our turning unto God. Our turning *from* him being in the bent and inclination of our wills and affections to sin; the change of the will, or the taking away of the *will* of *sinning*, is the principal part of repentance. In virtue of this penitential change in the soul, contrary affections are also substituted and set at work, with respect to the same object. There are pleasures in sin and it hath its wages. Those that live in “dead works,” both *delight* in sin, and have *complacency* in the accomplishment of it. These are affections which the soul exerciseth about sin committed, or to be committed. Instead of them, repentance, by which they are utterly banished, sets at work sorrow, grief, self-detestation, revenge, and the like afflictive passions of the mind. Nothing stirs but it affects the soul with respect to sin.

3. It respects the *course of life*, or the conversation. It is a repentance “*from* dead works,” that is, they are relinquished. Without this no profession of repentance is of any worth. To profess a repentance of sin and yet live to sin, is to mock God, deride his law, and deceive our own souls. This is that change which alone can evidence the internal change of the mind, will, and affections, to be real and sincere, Prov. xxviii, 13. Whatever is pretended without this, is false and hypocritical; like the repentance of Judah, “not with the whole heart, but feignedly;” Jerem. iii, 10. **בשקר** There was a *lie* in it; for their works answered not their words. The actual relinquishing of dead works is in scripture universally required; and it includes,—A full *purpose* of heart to renounce every sin;—constant endeavors to actuate and fulfil

this purpose;—an *actual relinquishment* of all sins in the course of our walking before God. This property of repentance will be prevalent against the *common sins of the world*, which they also lived in before their conversion,—and against a course in any sin or sins, either spiritual or fleshly, internal or external, 1 John iii, 9. Rom. vi, 2.

§6. The *second* instance of the doctrinal foundation supposed to be laid among the Hebrews, is that “of *faith towards God*.” He repenteth not, who hath not *faith* towards God; and he hath not faith towards God who repenteth not. And in this expression, where “repentance” is first placed, and “faith in God” afterwards, only the distinction that is between them is intended, but not an *order of nature* in the things themselves or in the method of teaching them. For in the order of nature, “faith towards God” must precede “repentance from dead works.” No man can use any argument to prevail with others to repentance, but it must be taken from the word of the law or gospel, the precepts, promises, and threatenings, of them. If there be no faith towards God with respect to law and gospel, promises and threatenings, whence should repentance from dead works, or the necessity of it, be demonstrated? On the other hand, no man ought to be considered as making a due *profession* of faith towards God, who doth not first declare his repentance from dead works. Nor can any other have the comfort of faith in God, but such as have in themselves some evidence of the sincerity of their repentance. Hence the difference between the order of *nature*, and that of *profession*. “Faith in God,” cannot here intend faith in the most general notion of it, because it is reckoned as a principle of the *doctrine of Christ*; but faith in God, absolutely taken, is a duty of the *law of nature*. Upon an acknowledgement of the

being of God, it is thereby required that we believe *in him* as the first eternal Truth, the sovereign Lord and Judge of all. And the Jews needed to have been instructed in this as a part of the doctrine of Christ. It is, therefore "faith in God" as accomplishing the promise given to Abraham, in sending Jesus Christ, and granting remission of sins by him, is here intended. For this, in fact, was that faith in particular which, at the first preaching of the gospel, the Hebrews were instructed in. And, therefore, with respect to *it* our apostle says, that he would not "lay again the foundation."

§7. The *third* principle, according to the order and sense of the words is, the *resurrection of the dead*. And this was a fundamental principle of the Jewish church, and indeed of all religions, properly so called, in the world. But how is it a fundamental principle of *all religion*? And how a fundamental principle of the *gospel*? As to the first, if it be once granted that men were made only for this world, that they have no other continuance assigned to their being, but what is common to them with the beasts that perish, there would be no more religion amongst them, than there is amongst the beast themselves. But it will be asked, whether the belief of the *immortality of the soul* be not sufficient to secure religion without the addition of this article? No; *eternal judgment* cannot be believed, on satisfactory grounds, without an antecedent acknowledgement of the resurrection of the dead. For what justice is it, that the whole of blessedness, or of misery, should fall on the soul only, where the body hath had a great share in the procurement of the one, or the other? Especially considering what influence the body hath towards evil, on the one hand; and what it often undergoeth for that which is good on the other? Shall we think that God gave bodies to the holy martyrs, only to endure inex-

pressible tortures and miseries for the sake of Christ, and then to perish for ever? A great number of the Jews had now apostatized into this atheism of denying the resurrection of the dead; and this, in particular, was the principal heresy of the *Sadducees*. They were very confident in their infidelity; and though they were *confounded* by our Savior, (with whom they would needs dispute about it,) yet after the manner of obstinate infidels, were not converted, Matt. xxii, 23, 24, &c.

This *principle*, therefore, both on account of its importance in itself, as also of the opposition made to it among the Jews by the *Sadducees*, the apostle took care to establish it in the first place; for those truths are, in an especial manner, to be confirmed, which are at any time peculiarly opposed. Besides; all they had to preach turned on this hinge—that Christ was raised from the dead—whereon *our* resurrection follows. They ingenuously confessed that without this “principle,” all their preaching was vain, and, of course, that all Christian faith was also vain, Cor. xv, 12—14. This, therefore, was always one of the “first principles,” which our apostle insisted on in preaching the gospel; a signal instance whereof we have in his discourse at Athens. He first reproves their sins and idolatries, declaring that God called them to repentance from those *dead works*. He then taught them faith in God, the living and true God, who so called them by Jesus Christ; confirming the necessity of both by the doctrine of “*the resurrection from the dead*, and a future judgment,” Acts xvii, 23, 24—30, 31. He seems, therefore, in the passage we are expounding, directly and summarily, to lay down those principles in the order which he constantly observed in his first declaration of the gospel.

§8. This truth being of so great importance, as that nothing in religion can subsist without it, the apostles very diligently confirmed it in the first churches. And for the same cause it was early assaulted by Satan, and opposed by many:—Some by an open *denial* of any such thing, 1 Cor. xv, 12. “How say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?” Others said, “the resurrection was *past already*,” 2 Tim. ii, 18. It is generally thought that Hymeneus and Philetus placed the resurrection in *conversion*, or *reformation* of life, as the *Marcionites* did afterwards. And some among ourselves begin to mutter, that the reviving of a new light, &c. is the resurrection intended in the scriptures. But, that “*the resurrection*” is a re-union of the soul and body, as death is their separation, the scripture is too express for any one to deny, and not virtually to reject it wholly. And it may be observed that our apostle doth not only condemn these errors as false, but declares positively that their admission “overthrows the faith,” and renders the preaching of the gospel vain and useless. Therefore we maintain that this “*resurrection of the dead*,” is “the restoration, by the power of God, of the same numerical body which died, in all the essential and integral parts of it, rendering it, in its re-union with the soul, immortal, or of an eternal duration in blessedness or misery.”

§9. The *fourth* principle is (κρίμα αἰώνιον) *eternal judgment*. This is the immediate consequent of the resurrection of the dead. Men shall not be raised again to live another life in this world, and, as it were, therein to make a new adventure; but it is to give an account of what is past, and to receive what they have done in the body, whether it be good or evil. And because there are no *outward transactions* be-

tween God and the souls of men after their departure out of this world, nor any alteration to be made as to their eternal state and condition, this judgment is spoken of as that which immediately succeeds death itself, Heb. ix, 27; "It is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment." The word (κρίμα) is commonly used for a *condemnatory sentence*. Therefore, some think that it is only the judgment of the wicked is intended. And indeed the day of judgment is most frequently spoken of in scripture with respect to them, See 2 Thes. i, 7—10; Jude 14, 15; 2 Pet. ii, 4, partly because the remembrance of it is suited to put an awe upon the pride and rage of men rushing into sin as the horse into the battle; and partly, that it might be a relief to the godly under all their trials. But, in reality, the judgment is general, and all men, both good and bad, must there stand in their lot. As the resurrection of the dead, that precedes, belongs to all; so doth the judgment that follows.

§10. Two things must be yet noticed, to clear this great principle of our faith,—The general *nature* of this eternal judgment—and then the *evidences* we have of its truth and certainty.

First, The *general concerns* of it being plainly expressed in the scripture; will declare its *nature*. As to its *TIME*, in general, there is a determined and unalterable day fixed for it; "God hath appointed a *day* wherein he will judge the world in righteousness," Acts xvii, 31. But as to the precise time, the knowledge of it is among the principal secrets of his sovereignty when all things foretold in the scriptures are accomplished, when the obedience of all the elect is completed, and the measure allotted to the wickedness of the world, through the forbearance of God, is filled up; then, and not before, shall the end be. In the mean

time, when we see a man old, weak, diseased, nature being decayed, and infirmities abounding, we may judge that his death is not far off, though we know not when he will die. Thus also we may form a guess about the state of the world. The JUDGE is Jesus Christ. *Originally* and absolutely this is the judgment of God, of him who made the world; and therefore it is often said, that "God shall judge the world," Deut. xxxii, 35, 36; Eccles. xii, 14. "God the judge of all," Heb. xii, 23. But the actual *administration* of it is committed to Jesus Christ alone, to be exercised visibly in his human nature, Rom. xiv, 11, &c. And herein he shall act the properties of both his natures. For as he shall visibly and gloriously appear in his human nature, exalted in the supreme place of judicature, and invested with sovereign power and authority over all flesh; so he shall act the power and omniscience of his Deity in upholding the whole state of the creation in judgment, and in discovering the hearts, and comprehending the words, thoughts, and actions of the children of men from the beginning to the end of the world. And, as all the *holy angels* shall accompany him, as ministers and witnesses to his righteous judgments, Matt. xxv, 31; Luke ix, 26; Jude 12; Dan. vii, 10. So also in judging *fallen angels*, and the reprobate world, the saints—acquitted, justified, and glorified, in the first place—shall concur with him in this judgment by applauding his righteousness and holiness with their unanimous suffrage, 1 Cor. vi, 2, 3. For—as to the OUTWARD MANNER of this judgment, it shall be with *solemnity* and great glory, 2 Thes. xi, 7, 8, 9, 10; Jude 14, 15; Dan. vii, 9; Rev. xx, 4, 5, partly for the demonstration of the glory of Jesus Christ, who hath been so despised, reproached, persecuted in the world; and partly, to fill the hearts of sinners with

dread and terror, Rev. vi, 17, 18. The ORDER of it will be, that all the elect shall *first* be acquitted and pronounced blessed; since they join the Lord Christ in judging the world, which they could not do, if themselves were not first freed and exalted. The PERSONS to be judged are *fallen angels*, 1 Cor. vi, 3; 2 Peter ii, 4; Jude 6; Matt. xxv, 41. *All men* without exception, Isa. xlv. 23; Rom. xiv, 9, 10; Matt. xv, 31; whether godly or ungodly. But whether all the sins of the former shall be then called over and made known to others, seeing they are known to *Him* who is more than all the world besides,—I question. The RULE whereby all men shall be judged, is, “the law of their obedience made known to them.” The Gentiles shall be judged by the law of nature, Rom. ii, 12—14. The *Jews* before the coming of Christ, by the doctrine, precepts, and promises of the law and the prophets; and all men, to whom the gospel hath been offered, according to it, Rom. ii, 16. No man shall be able to complain of a surprisal, or pretend ignorance of the law whereby he was to be judged. The sentence of it is proposed to men continually. In the word of the gospel is the eternal condition of all the sons of men positively determined.

§11. *Secondly*. The *evidence* which God hath given concerning this future judgment may be also briefly considered—God hath planted a PRESUMPTION and sense of it on the minds and consciences of all men. *Conscience* is nothing but that judgment which men make, and which they cannot but make, of their moral actions with reference to the supreme future judgment of God. Hence the apostle, treating of this future judgment, Rom. ii, 12—16, and shewing what *evidence* all mankind had; in the mean time, that such a judgment should take place, ver. 14, 15, declares

that it consists in their own unavoidable thoughts concerning their own actions, good or evil, which in the mean while accused them, and forced them to own a judgment to come. Yes, this is the proper language of conscience to sinners on all occasions. And so effectual was this evidence in the minds of the Heathen, that they generally allowed the force of it, though mixed with abundance of fabulous inventions and traditions, Rom: i, 21. But this sense being that which keeps mankind within some tolerable bounds in sinning, the psalmist prays that it might be increased in them, Psal. xix, 13; See Gen. xx, 11. To these dictates of conscience, we may add the working of REASON. The final impunity of flagitious sinners in this world; the unrelieved oppressions, afflictions, and miseries of the best; the prosperity of wicked devilish designs; the defeating and overthrow of holy, just, righteous endeavors; promiscuous accidents to all sorts of persons, however distinguished by piety and impiety; the prosperous course of men proud and blasphemous, who oppose God in principles and practice; the secret undiscovered murderers of martyrs and innocents; the extreme confusion that seems to be in all things here below; with innumerable other things of the like kind, are ready to perplex the minds of men in this matter. They have greatly exercised even the saints of God, Psal. lxxiii, ver. 4 to 17, &c. and this consideration turned some of the wisest Heathens into atheism or outrageous blasphemies. But even *reason*, rightly exerted, will lead men to conclude, that upon the supposition of a divine Being and Providence, it must needs be that all these things shall be called over again, and then receive a final decision, of which in this world they are not capable. For, upon a due examination, it will quickly appear that the *moral ac-*

tions of men with respect to God, are such as it is utterly impossible judgment should be finally exercised towards them, in things visible and temporal; or that in this world they should receive a just recompense of reward. Suppose God should, *in this world*, distribute rewards and punishments constantly, according to what he sees in the hearts and inward dispositions of men; it is evident, that it would fill all men with unspeakable confusions, and lead them to infer, that indeed there is no certain rule of judgment, no limits of good and evil; seeing it would be absolutely impossible that, by them, the judgments of God should be reduced to any such rules or bounds; the reason of them being altogether unknown, Psalm lxxvii, 19, xxxvii, 6.

Should God visibly and constantly dispense rewards and punishments in this world, according to the rule of men's knowledge, which alone hath the appearance of being satisfactory, it would be a principle, or at least the occasion, of a worst kind of atheism than any yet the earth hath been pestered with. For it could not be but that the most would make the judgment of men the only rule of all they did, which God must be obliged to comply with, or be unrighteous; which is absolutely to dethrone him, and leave him only to be the executioner of the wills and reasons of men. But from all these and the like perplexities, *reason itself* may quietly take sanctuary in submission to sovereign wisdom; according to which it is not only suitable to justice, but necessary, that there should be a future eternal judgment, to pass according to truth upon all the ways and actions of men. Again: To the verdict of reason we may also add EXTRAORDINARY JUDGMENTS. In great judgments the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the ungodliness of men,

Rom. i, 18, and an intimation is given of what he *will do* hereafter. For as he leaves not himself without witness in respect of his goodness and patience, in that he “doth good, and giveth rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling men’s hearts with food and gladness,” Acts xiv, 17. So he gives testimony to his righteousness and holiness, in the judgments that he executes, Psalm ix, 16. He will sometimes reach out his hand from heaven in extraordinary instances of vengeance, on purpose that men may know that things shall not always be passed over in such a promiscuous manner, but that he hath appointed another day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. And, for this reason, such temporary final judgments as are evidences of the future eternal judgment of God are sometimes expressed in words as seem to declare that judgment itself rather than the types of it; Isa. xxxiv, 4; Rev. vi, 13; Dan. vii, 9, 10; Matt. xxiv, 29, 30. But, notwithstanding, God hath not absolutely intrusted the evidence and persuasion of this important truth, which is the foundation of all religion, to the remains of *innate light* in the minds and consciences of men which may be variously obscured, until it be almost extinguished; nor yet to the exercise of reason inquiring into the present administration of Providence in this world, which is oftentimes so corrupted as to be nearly useless; nor yet to the influence which *extraordinary judgments* may have on the minds of men, and which some fortify themselves against by their obstinacy in sin and security; but he hath abundantly testified to it by *express revelation* from the beginning of the world, now recorded in his word, by which all men must be tried, whether they will or no. It may not be doubted, but that *Adam* was acquainted with this truth immediately from God

himself; and "*Enoch*, the seventh from Adam, prophesied on the same subject," Jude ver. 14, 15.

§12. These, therefore, (that we may return to the text) are those *fundamental principles* of the Christian religion, which the apostle calls the "doctrine of baptisms," and the "laying on of hands."

But there occurs no small difficulty from the use of the word "*baptisms*" in the plural number; for it is no where else so used, when the baptism of the gospel is intended, and the Jewish washings are often so called.

All persons *who began to attend the gospel* were diligently instructed in the forementioned principles, with others of a like nature, (for they are mentioned only as *instances*) before they were admitted to partake of this ordinance, with imposition of hands; these, therefore, are called the "doctrine of baptisms, or the *catechetical*, fundamental truths, being the things whereof they were to make a solemn profession. This exposition I adhere to.

But if we suppose that this "doctrine of baptisms" is a *distinct principle* by itself, then the word cannot by any means be restrained to the baptism of water only; for although the use and end of our sacramental initiation into Christ, and the profession of the gospel be an important head of Christian doctrine, yet no reason can be given, why *that* should be called "*baptisms*," seeing then it would respect only one thing itself, and not the *many persons* who are made partakers of it. If, however, the *doctrine* concerning "baptisms" be intended, the *whole of what is taught* by the outward sign concerning the purification of the souls of men, must be contained in it. And though, indeed, the *doctrine of baptism*, in this sense, is among the *rudiments* of the Christian religion, yet I

prefer the other interpretation; and the rather, because to "baptisms" is immediately added "imposition of hands."

§13. Some suppose, that by "*imposition of hands*" is intended that rite in the church, which was afterwards called *confirmation*; whereas it has been pleáded, there were two sorts of persons baptized, viz. *adults* at their first hearing of the gospel, and the *infant children of believers*, who were admitted to be members of the church; the first sort were instructed in the above principles *before* they were admitted to baptism; but the other, being received as *branches of a family* on which the blessing of Abraham was to come, and to whom the promise of the covenant was extended, being thereon baptized in their infancy, were to be instructed in them as they grew up to years of understanding. Afterwards when they were established in the knowledge of these necessary truths, and were resolved on personal obedience to the gospel, they were offered to the fellowship of the faithful, and hereon, giving the account of their faith and repentance which others had done before they were baptized, they were admitted into the communion of the church, the elders thereof laying their hands on them in token of their reception, and praying for their confirmation in the faith. Hence the same doctrines became previously necessary to *both* these rites; before *baptism* to to them that were *adult*, and towards them who were baptized in *infancy* before the *imposition of hands*. And I acknowledge that this was the state of things in the *apostolical churches*, and that it ought to be so in all others. Persons baptized in their infancy ought to be instructed in the fundamental principles of religion, and make profession of their own faith and repentance before they are admitted into the soci-

ety of any particular church; but that in those first days, persons were ordinarily after baptism admitted into their societies "by imposition of hands," is nowhere intimated in scripture; and the whole business of *confirmation* is of a much later date, so that it cannot be here intended; for the "laying on of hands" in the text must have respect to somewhat then in common use.

Now there is mention in scripture of a *four-fold* "imposition of hands" used by Christ and his apostles: the *first* was peculiar to his own person by way of *authoritative benediction*; the *second* was used in the *healing of diseases*; the *third* in setting apart persons to the work of the ministry; and the *fourth* was used by the apostles in conferring supernatural gifts. The first of these was only a personal action, in one single instance; the second was extraordinary and occasional, and therefore utterly impossible to be here intended; the third, though a rite of standing use in the church, is not likewise here meant, for there is no just reason why the apostle should proceed from the doctrine of baptism to the ordination of ministers; wherefore the imposition of hands in the fourth sense, which was for the collation of supernatural gifts, is most probably intended by our apostle. For, adhering to our first interpretation as the most solid and firm, the "imposition of hands," in the text is a description of the *persons to be instructed in the other fundamental principles*, but is itself no principle; which consideration necessarily excludes the other senses; besides, this laying on of hands commonly, if not constantly, in those days accompanied or immediately followed baptism, Acts viii, 14—17, xix, 6, and this was a thing of singular present use, wherein the glory of the gospel, and its propagation, where highly concerned: and this, next

to the preaching of the word, was the great means for propagating the gospel. To which we may add, that in the following verse (immediately connected with this) mention is made of those who were made "partakers of the Holy Ghost," that is, of his miraculous gifts and operations, which were *communicated* by this imposition of hands.

§14. (III.) We come next to the apostles *resolution*, and the *limitation* of that resolution, "and this will we do, if God permit." (Καὶ τούτο ποιήσομεν) "*And this will we do*," that is, either we will "go on to perfection," (as ver. 1,) which is the more remote antecedent; or this will we do, "laying again the foundation," which is the next antecedent. There are some things which make it evident, that (τούτο) "*this*" refers to the former—going on to perfection; for he repeatedly intimates his intention to *omit* handling those fundamental principles; and he not only declares his *resolution* to omit them, but also gives a sufficient *reason* for it in the last verse of the foregoing chapter. They had been already sufficiently instructed in those "*principles*;" to inculcate them farther on those by whom they were learned, was needless, and equally so with respect to those who had either not received, or else rejected them; which he confirms with a severe reason and dreadful consideration, ver. 4—8. On the other hand he speaks of "going on to perfection" *positively*, as being his main purpose and design; "*Let us*," saith he, "*go on to perfection*," me in teaching, you in learning; and *this* will we do, if God permit. For the reasons before insisted on, and afterwards to be added, I will proceed to declare the principal mysteries of the gospel, especially those which concern the priesthood of Christ, and thereby raise up the building of your faith and profession upon the *foundation* that

hath been laid; whereby, through the grace of God, you may be carried on to perfection, and become skilful in the word of righteousness."

(Εαν περ επιτρεχη ο Θεος) "*If God permit:*" There may be in these words a respect to three things in the will of God, and consequently they admit a three-fold exposition; for they may either express the sovereign will and pleasure of God, and our absolute dependence upon him, with which all our resolutions ought to be limited;—or respect may be had to the condition of the *Hebrews*, whose sloth and negligence in hearing the word he is now reproving; here intimating, that there may be some fear lest God should be so provoked by their former miscarriages, as that he would not afford them the means of farther instruction;—or there is a *meiosis* in the words, wherein a farther respect to the will of God is included than expressed. For it is not a mere naked *permission* in God that the apostle intends, as if he should have said; "*If God let me alone*, and as it were wink at what I am doing;" but there is a supposition of the continuance of God's gracious assistance and especial presence with him, without which he frequently declared he could neither undertake nor accomplish any thing. God can in the beginning or middle of an epistle or sermon take us off when he pleaseth, if he does but withdraw his assistance from us. And all these respects to the will of God are not only consistent, so that the closing with one excludeth not the other, but they are all of them plainly included in the apostle's intention. Let us now advert to the *observations*.

§15. (IV.) *Obs.* 1. It is the duty of gospel ministers to take care, not only that the doctrine they preach be *true*, but also that it may be *seasonable* with respect to the state and condition of their hearers: un-

seasonable truths are like "showers in harvest." It is a "word spoken in season," that is beautiful, Prov. xxv, 11; and to this purpose two things are especially to be considered:

(1.) The *condition* and capacity of the hearers: suppose them to be persons, as the apostle speaks, of full age, such as can receive and digest strong meat, that have already attained some good acquaintance with the mysteries of the gospel; in preaching to such an auditory, if men for want of ability to do otherwise, shall constantly treat of first principles, things common and obvious, it will not only be useless to their edification, but also at length will make them weary of the ordinance itself; and the effect will be no better on the *other* side; where the hearers being mostly weak, abstruse mysteries are insisted on without a prudent accommodation of things to their capacity: it is, therefore, the duty of the stewards in the house of God to give to all their proper portion. This is the blessed advice our apostle gives to Timothy, 2 Tim. ii, 15; "Study to shew thyself approved to God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly *cutting out the word of truth.*" This is that whereby a minister may evince himself to be a workman that "needeth not to be ashamed:" it is the duty and wisdom of a minister to apply himself in the *doctrine* he preacheth, and the *mode* of his delivery to the more *general state* of his hearers.

(2.) The circumstances of *time* are duly to be considered; for instance those of known public *temptations*, of prevalent *errors* and heresies, of special *oppositions* and hatred to any important truths, are always to be regarded. For I could easily manifest that the apostle in his epistles hath continually an especial respect to them all.

Again: Some important doctrines of truth may, in preaching, be omitted for a season; but none must ever be neglected or forgotten.

§16. *Obs. 2.* That it is a necessary duty of the dispensers of the gospel to excite their hearers, by all pressing considerations, to make a progress in the knowledge of the truth: thus our apostle deals with these Hebrews. He would not have them always stand at the porch, but enter into the sanctuary, and behold the hidden glories of the house of God; elsewhere, 2 Tim. iii, 4; he complains of some who are "always learning," that is, under the means of it, but yet, by reason of their negligence and carelessness, "never come to a *clear knowledge* of the truth." In the same spirit he complains of the Corinthians, for their want of proficiency in spiritual things, so that he was forced, in his dealing with them, to dwell still on the rudiments of religion, 1 Cor. iii, 1, 2. In all his epistles he is continually pressing this on the churches, that they should "labor to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ;" and this was a principal matter of his prayers for them, Ephes. iii, 14—19, chap. i, 16—19, Col. ii, 1, 2. And they are utter strangers to his spirit and example, who are careless in this matter. Wherefore this duty of ministerial incitements is necessary to the dispensers of the gospel on sundry accounts:

(1.) Because their hearers do *greatly need* the exercise of it: they are apt to be slothful and weary; many begin to run well; but are quickly ready to faint. Weariness of the flesh, self-conceit of having attained what is sufficient, perhaps more than others; curiosity and itching ears in attending to novelties; dislike of holiness and fruitfulness of life; the difficulty of coming to the knowledge of the truth in a due manner, mak-

ing the sluggard cry there is a lion in the streets, &c. are ready to discourage men in their progress. And if there be none to excite, to warn, and admonish them, to discover the variety of pretences whereby men in this matter deceive themselves, to lay open snares and dangers which they cast themselves into, to remind them of the excellency of divine things and the knowledge of them, it cannot be but that their spiritual condition will be prejudiced, if not their souls ruined.

(2.) The *advantages* which professors have, by a progress in the knowledge of spiritual things, make it a necessary duty. Of what sort are they whom we see every day seduced? Are they not persons who are either, brutishly ignorant of the very nature of the Christian religion, and the first principles of it? or such as have obtained a little superficial knowledge and confidence therein, without ever laying a firm foundation, or carrying on an orderly superstructure in wisdom and obedience? The foundation of God standeth sure at all times: God knoweth who are his, and he will so preserve his elect as to render their total seduction impossible. But (this not being the rule of duty we may say) it will be very difficult for any to hold out firm and unshaken to the end, if their minds be not inlaid and fortified with a sound well grounded knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel. It is the teaching of the Spirit, the unction of the Holy One, whereby we know all necessary truths, that must preserve us in such a season, 1 John ii, 27. *Proportionable* to our growth in knowledge will be our increase in holiness and obedience. If this at any time fall out otherwise, it is from the sins and wickedness of the persons in whom it is, and not from the nature of the things themselves, See Ephes. iv, 21—24, Rom.

xii, 2. That ignorance is the mother of devotion, is a maxim that came from hell to fetch the souls of men, and (awful to think!) what multitudes have been carried back with it—where let it abide. Now the reason why the improvement of knowledge tends to the improvement of holiness and obedience, is, because *faith* acts itself on Christ only by the things which we *know*, whereby spiritual strength is derived for the performance of them. Our usefulness in the church, our families, and among all men, greatly depends hereon; as every man's experience will readily suggest to him. If, therefore the ministers of the gospel have any care for, and love to the souls of their hearers; if they understand any thing of the nature of the office and work they have undertaken, or the account they must one day give of the discharge of it, they cannot but esteem it among the most necessary duties incumbent on them, to excite, provoke, persuade, and carry on their believing charge, towards the *perfection* before described.

The case of that people is deplorable and dangerous, whose teachers are not able to carry them on in the knowledge of the gospel mysteries. The key of knowledge may be taken away by ignorance as well as malice, and which, alas! is but too common. And when knowledge has perished from them whose office it is to preserve it, must not their *people* also perish for want of knowledge? Hos. iv, 6, Matt. xv, 14.

§17. *Obs. 3.* In our progress in knowledge, we ought to go on with diligence and the full bent of our wills and affections. I intend hereby to express the sense of the Greek word, (*Προχωρεῖτε*) which we render, "*Let us go on.*" It is of a *passive* signification, denoting the effect; let us be *acted*, *carried on*; but yet includes the active use of means. And the

duties intended may be reduced to these heads.—Diligence in our application to the *use of the best means*, Hos. vi, 7. Those that would be carried on towards perfection, must not be careless, or regardless of the opportunities of instruction, nor be detained from them by sloth or vanity, nor diverted by the businesses and occasions of this world. There are some who take no small pains to enjoy the means of instruction, and will scarce miss an opportunity; but when they have so done—they sit down and rest. It is a shame to consider how little they stir up their minds to conceive aright the things wherein they are instructed. So they continue to hear from day to day, and from year to year, but are not carried on *one step* towards perfection. Again: It is required, that our *wills and affections* be sincerely inclined to, and fixed upon the things themselves which we are taught. These are the principal *sails* whereby we are carried on in our voyage. He that knows but a little, and yet loves much, will quickly know and love more. And he who hath much knowledge, but little love, will find that he “labors in the fire” for the increase of the one or the other. When, in the diligent use of means, our wills and affections adhere with delight to the things wherein we are instructed, then are we in our right course; then, if the holy gales of the spirit of God breathe on us, are we in a blessed tendency towards perfection, 2 Thes. ii, 10. Moreover; the *diligent practice* of what we know is no less necessary. This is the immediate end of all teaching and all learning; this is what makes our knowledge to be our happiness. “If you know these things, *happy* are ye if ye do them.” Doing what we know is the *great key* to give us an entrance into the knowledge of what we

knew not before. If we do the will of Christ, we shall know of his word, John vii, 17.

§18. *Obs.* 4. There is no interest in Christ or his genuine religion, to be obtained without "repentance from dead works." This was one of the first things preached to sinners; Christ came not only to save men from their sins, but to turn them from their sins; when he comes out of Sion, as a redeemer, a deliverer, a savior, he turns away ungodliness from Jacob;" that is, he turns Jacob from ungodliness, Rom. xi, 26, viz. by *repentance*. This was *one principal end* of the birth, life, death, and exaltation of Christ; the enmity on *our* part, as well as on the part of God, must also be taken away, or reconciliation will not be finished. Now we were enemies in *our minds* by wicked works, Col. i, 21; and thereby alienated from the life of God, Eph. iv, 18; but who can conceive of the removal of this without *repentance*? Without *this*, whatever notions men have of reconciliation with God, they will find him, in the issue, as *devouring fire*, or everlasting burnings. All doctrines, notions, or persuasions, that tend to lessen the necessity of *personal repentance*, are pernicious to the souls of men. And there is nothing so much to be dreaded, so much to be abhorred, as a pretence taken to any sin, without repentance, from the doctrine or grace of the gospel. "Shall we continue in sin," saith our apostle, "that grace may abound? God forbid!" Those who do so, and thereby "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness," are among the number of them, whose "damnation sleepeth not."

§19. We may now inquire after our own interest in this great and necessary duty. When the spirit of grace is poured out on men, they shall mourn apart, Zech. xii, 12—14; that is, they shall peculiarly and solemnly separate themselves to a right discharge

of this duty between God and their own souls. It respects all and every sin; every crooked path and every step in it: it absolutely excludes all reserves. To profess repentance, and yet with any express reserves for any sin, approacheth very near the great sin of lying to the Holy Ghost. It is like Ananias's keeping back part of the price, when the whole was devoted. And these soul-destroying reserves, which absolutely overthrow the whole nature of repentance, commonly arise from one of these pretences:—That the sin reserved may be *small*, and of no great importance. Is it not a little one? But true repentance respects the nature of sin, which is in every sin equally, the least as well as the greatest. The least reserve for vanity, pride, conformity to the world, inordinate desires or affections, utterly overthrow the *truth* of repentance, and, of course, all the benefits of it. Another pretence is, that it is *useful*, at least for the present, and cannot be parted with. So Naaman would reserve his bowing before the king in the house of Rimmon, because his honors and preferments depended thereon. So it is with many in their course of life or trading in the world; some advantages, by indirect ways, seem as *useful* to them as their "right hand," which they cannot as yet *cut off* and cast from them. But he who in this case will not part with a right eye, or a right hand, must be content to go with them both to hell-fire. Again: Some have a reserve of *secrecy*. That which is hidden from every eye, they suppose, may be left behind. Some sweet morsel of this kind may yet be rolled under the tongue. But this is an evidence of gross hypocrisy, and the highest contempt of God, who "seeth in secret." Once more: The *uncertainty* of some things, whether they are sins or no, has been made a pretence. Some may think such neglect of duty, such compliances with the world, are not sins;

and whereas themselves have not *so full* a conviction of their being sinful, as they have of other sins which are notorious and against the light of nature, they will break through, and indulge themselves in them. But this also impeacheth the *truth* of repentance. Where it is sincere, it engageth the soul against "all appearances of evil." And one that is truly humbled, hath no rule more certain in his Christian walk, than not to do what he hath *just cause to doubt* whether it be lawful or no. True repentance, therefore, is *universal* and inconsistent with these reserves. As to the *seasons* in which it is wrought, we may observe, it is ever produced on the *first saving view* of Jesus Christ as crucified, Zech. xii, 10. It is impossible that any should have any such view of Christ crucified, and not be savingly humbled for sin. And there is no one single trial of our *faith in Christ*, whether it be genuine or no, that is more natural than this;—what have been the *effects* of it, as to humiliation and *repentance*? If these ensued not, upon what we accounted our believing, we had not a saving view of Christ crucified. Now there are several ways whereby men miss their duty with respect to this *first principle*, and thereby ruin their souls eternally. Some utterly *despise* it; others will repent *in* their dead works, but not *from* them; that is upon convictions or dangers, they will be troubled for their sins, but yet they will abide *in* them. There are not a few to whom this kind of repentance stand in the same stead all their days, as confession and absolution doth to the *papists*; it gives them present ease, that they may return to their former sins. Some repent *from dead works* in a sense, but are never truly and savingly humbled for sin: their lives are changed, but their hearts are not renewed.

§20. This repentance, in the nature and kind of it, is a duty to be continued in the whole course of our lives. It ceaseth as to those especial acts which belong to our *initiation* into a gospel state, but it abides as to our orderly perservation therein. There must be no end of repentance, until there is a full end of *sin*. All tears will not be wiped from our eyes, until all sin is perfectly removed from our souls. Now repentance in this sense may be considered two ways:

1. As it is a *constant duty* of the gospel. Thus considered, it is our humble mournful walking with God, under a sense of sin continually manifesting itself in our natures and infirmities. He whose heart is so lifted up, on any pretence, as not to abide in the *constant exercise* of these acts of repentance, is one in whom the soul of God hath no delight.

2. This continued repentance may be also considered as *occasional*; when its exercises are attended with singular solemnities. When, for instance, a person is surprised into any great actual sin, such an occasion is not to be passed over with the ordinary actings of repentance. David upon his *fall* brings his renewed repentance into such a solemnity, as if it had been his first conversion. So Peter, upon the denial of his Master, *wept bitterly*, which, with his following humiliation, and the renovation of his faith, our Savior calls his "conversion," Luke xxii, 23. A *new conversion* of him who was before really converted. There is nothing more dangerous to our spiritual state, than to pass by particular instances of sin, with the general duties of repentance. Again: The sins of a *family* or *church* to which we are related, call for this peculiar solemnity of repentance, 2 Cor. vii, 11. To which we may add, *afflictions* and sore trials; as we see in the case of Job, chap. xlii, 6.

We may here finally remark, that as this repentance is a *grace of the Spirit* of Christ, whatever unpleasantness to the *flesh* there may be in its exercise, it is sweet, refreshing, and secretly pleasant to the *inner man*. Let us not be deterred from abounding in this duty. It is not a morose, severe self-maceration; but an humble, gracious, mournful walking with God, wherein the soul finds rest, sweetness, joy, and peace being rendered thereby compliant with the will of God, benign, useful, kind, and compassionate towards men.

§21. *Obs.* 5. Faith in God, as to the accomplishing of the great promise in sending his Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, is the great fundamental principle of our interest in, and profession of the gospel. There is nothing in the gospel that God himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy apostles, do more insist upon than this—that God hath *fulfilled his promise* in sending his Son into the world. On this one thing depends all religion, the truth of the Bible, and all our salvation. If it be not evident that God hath *accomplished his promise*, the whole Bible may pass for a cunningly devised fable; for it is all built upon this supposition, that God *gave*, and hath *accomplished* it; the first being the foundation of the Old Testament, and the latter of the New. And there are sundry things that signalize our faith in God with respect hereunto; as

(1.) This promise of sending Jesus Christ was the *first express engagement* that God ever made of his faithfulness and veracity to any of his creatures. Hence this was the first and immediate object of faith proposed to man after the fall—to believe in God, with respect to his faithfulness in the *future* accomplishment of his promise; and faith concerning its

actual accomplishment, is the first thing required of *us*. It is observable, that this promise hung longest on the file before its accomplishment. There was not less than *four thousand years* between its giving and the performance of it. And this long suspension gave such advantage to Satan, in his opposition to it, that he prevailed against every expectation, but that of *faith* "tried and more precious than gold." It was all, in a manner, that the church of God had to live upon during that long season; the sole *foundation* of its faith, obedience, and consolation. All other promises, all precepts, and institutions, for the direction and instruction of the church, were built on this one promise, and resolvable into it. This gave them life and signification, therewith they were to stand and fall. The Jewish church rejecting the accomplishment of this promise, utterly perished. It will be said, perhaps, that this promise being actually accomplished, and that taken for granted, we have not the like concern in it, as they had who lived before the said accomplishment. But this is a mistake: no man believes aright that the Son of God is come in the flesh, but he who believes that he came in the accomplishment of the promise of God, to the glory of his truth and faithfulness. And it is from hence that we know aright both the occasion, cause, and end of his coming; which, whosoever doth not consider, his pretended faith is vain.

(2.) This is the *greatest promise* that God ever gave to the children of men, and therefore faith in him with respect to it, is both necessary to us, and greatly tends to his glory. Indeed all the concernments of God's glory in the church, and our eternal welfare are involved in it,

Only we must add, that the consideration of the accomplishment of this promise is a great encouragement and support to faith with respect to all other promises of God. None ever had such an opposition made to its accomplishment. Never was any promise more likely to be defeated by the unbelief of men; which, if any thing, or had it been suspended on any condition, might have disappointed its event. And shall we think that God will leave any other of his promises unaccomplished, that he will not in due time engage his omnipotent power and infinite wisdom in the discharge of his truth and faithfulness? Hath he sent his Son after four thousand years expectation, and will he not in due time destroy antichrist, call again the Jews, set up the kingdom of his Son gloriously in the world, and finally save all that sincerely believe? This great instance of divine fidelity leaves no room for unbelieving objections, as to any promises whatever, made under the same assurance.

§22. *Obs.* 6. The doctrine of the resurrection is a fundamental principle of the gospel, the faith whereof is indispensably necessary to the obedience and consolation of all that profess it. I call it a "principle of the gospel," not because it was there absolutely *first* revealed. It was made known under the Old Testament, and was virtually included in the first promise. In the faith of it the patriarchs lived and died; and it is testified in the Psalms and prophets. Hence did the ancients confess that they were strangers and pilgrims in this world, seeking another city and country, wherein their *persons* should dwell, Heb. xi, 16. And this was with relation to God's *covenant* with them, wherein, as it follows, "God was not ashamed to be called their God;" that is, their God in covenant, which relation could never be broken; and

therefore our Savior proves the resurrection from thence, because, if the dead rise not again, the *covenant relation* between God and his people must cease, Matt. xxii, 31, 32. Not to mention many of the patriarchs, Isaiah is express to the same purpose, chap. xxvi, 19. "Thy dead shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." This God proposeth for the comfort of the prophet, and all those who were either persecuted or slain in those days for righteousness' sake: for which purpose their resurrection is directly and emphatically expressed. And whereas some would wrest the words to signify no more than the deliverance and exaltation of those who were in great distress, yet they must acknowledge that it is expressed in allusion to the resurrection of the dead, which is therefore, at least, *implied* in the words, and was believed in the church. The same doctrine is also taught in Ezekiel's vision of the vivification of *dry bones*, chap. xxxvii, which, while it declared the resurrection of Israel from their distressed condition, yet declared it with *allusion* to the resurrection at the last day; and without the supposition of the faith of it, the vision had not been instructive. Many other testimonies to the same purpose might be insisted on.

§23. I do not, therefore, reckon this a principle of the doctrine of the gospel absolutely, and exclusively to the revelations of the Old Testament, but on *three* other accounts:—because it is most clearly and fully taught therein;—because of that *solemn confirmation* and pledge of it which was given in the resurrection of Christ from the dead;—and because it hath a *peculiar influence* on our obedience under the gospel,

Under the Old Testament the church had *sundry* motives to obedience taken from temporal things, such as prosperity and peace in the land of Canaan; with deliverance out of troubles and distresses. But we are now left, almost entirely, to promises of *invisible and eternal* things, which cannot be fully enjoyed but by virtue of the resurrection from the dead. And therefore these promises are made in a manner unspeakably more clear than they were to them, and so our motives and encouragements to obedience are unspeakably advanced above theirs. This may well, therefore, be esteemed as an especial principle of the gospel. And

It is an *animating principle* of gospel obedience, because we are thereby assured, that no "labors in the Lord" are lost. We are assured that they shall not only be *remembered*, but also *rewarded*. It hath the same respect to our *consolation*; for "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, then are we of all men most miserable," 1 Cor. xv, 19; that is, if we regard only outward things in this world, we see that reproaches, scornings, revilings, troubles, and persecutions have been the *lot* of most of them who hoped in Christ. But is this all we shall have from him? Stay awhile; these things will be called over again, at the resurrection (and that is all in good time,) when all shall be put into another posture, see 2 Thes. i, 6—10. We have, therefore, no reason to despond for what may befall us in this life, nor at any distress our flesh may be put to. We are, it may be, sometimes ready to faint, or to think much of the pains we put ourselves to in religious duties, or of what we undergo for righteousness' sake; but the day of recompense is coming; *that* will make up all. This flesh which we now employ (often weak and crazy) in a constant course of the most difficult duties, shall be raised out of the dust,

purified from all its infirmities, freed from all its weaknesses, made incorruptible and immortal, to enjoy everlasting rest and glory. Let us then "comfort ourselves with these words," 1 Thes. iv, 18.

§24. *Obs.* 7. The doctrine of the eternal judgment being a first principle, the ministers of the gospel ought to dwell greatly on the consideration of it, as represented in its terror and glory, that they may be stirred up to deal effectually with the souls of men that are about to fall under the vengeance of that day. Without this, it cannot be but that men will grow cold, and dead, and formal in their ministry. If the judgment-seat of Christ be not continually in our eye, whatever other motives we may have to diligence in our work, we shall have comparatively but little regard to the souls of men, nor shall we find ourselves much concerned whether they live and die in their sins or not.

§25. To the foregoing observations we may add the following;

1. Persons to be admitted into the church, and to a participation of all the holy ordinances thereof, had need to be *well instructed* in the important principles of the gospel.

2. No *discouragements* should deter the ministers of the gospel from proceeding to declare, when called to it, the mysteries of Christ, the dispensation of which is committed to them. Among the various discouragements they meet with, that is not the least which ariseth from the *dulness* of the hearers. This our apostle had now in his eye in a peculiar manner, and yet was resolved to break through it, in the discharge of his duty. God is pleased *sometimes* to convey saving light to the minds of men, before very dark and ignorant, by the deepest mysteries of the gospel; without

such preparatory instruction in the more obvious principles of it, as is *ordinarily* required. Not knowing, therefore, by what means, how or when, God will work upon the souls of men, it is their duty to proceed in the declaration of the *whole counsel* of God committed to them, and leave the success of all to him by whom they are employed.

3. As it is our duty to submit ourselves, in all our undertakings, to the *will of God*, so especially in those wherein his glory is immediately concerned. In vain shall any man, be his condition at present what it may, seek for satisfaction and success in any thing independent on the will of God.

4. Let them who are entrusted with the means of knowledge and grace, improve them with diligence, lest, upon their neglect, God suffer not his ministers farther to instruct them.

VERSES 4—6.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

§1. The passage attended with difficulties. The subject stated. §2 (I.) Connexion of the words. §3. (II.) The persons spoken of, in general. §4, 5. Once enlightened §6. Tasted of the heavenly gift §7. Made partakers of the Holy Ghost. §8. Tasted the good word of God. §9. The powers of the world to come. §10. (III.) What is supposed concerning them. If they shall fall away. §11, 12. Impossible to renew them again to repentance. §13 (IV.) General observations. §14. Additional ones.

§1. **T**HAT this passage hath been looked upon as accompanied with great difficulties, is known to all; and many have been the differences about its interpretation; for both doctrinally and practically, many have stum-

led at it. Some contend that they are *true believers*, who are here described, and that their character is given us by sundry inseparable properties of such persons. Hence they conclude, that such believers may totally and finally fall from grace, and perish eternally. In fact, the hypothesis of the final apostasy of true believers is that by which they are influenced to suppose that such are here intended. Wherefore others, who will not admit that, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, true believers can perish everlastingly, say, that *they* are not here intended; or if they are, the words are only comminatory. That is, although the *consequence* be true, on the *supposition* laid down, yet the *supposition itself* is not asserted—that true believers may really fall away, and absolutely perish. These things have been the matter of tedious contests among the learned.

Again: there have been sundry mistakes in the *practical application* of these words. When some persons have been surprised with terrors and troubles of conscience, they have withal, in their darkness and distress, supposed themselves to be fallen into the condition here described, and consequently concluded themselves to be irrecoverably lost. In the words we consider:

I. Their *connexion* with those foregoing, intimating the occasion of its whole discourse.

II. The *persons* spoken of, under sundry qualifications.

III. What is *supposed* concerning them.

IV. What is *affirmed* of them on that supposition.

§2. (I.) The *connexion* of the words is included in the casual particle (*γὰρ*) *for*; which introduces a *reason* for what had been before discoursed, and also respects the *limitation*.—‘If God permit.’ He doth not

herein express his judgment that they to whom he wrote were such as he describes (for he afterwards declares, that he hoped *better things* concerning them,) only it was necessary to give them this *caution*, that they might take due care *not to be such*. And whereas he had manifested that they were *slow* as to their progress in knowledge and suitable practice; he lets them here know the danger there was in continuing in that slothful condition. For not to *proceed* in the ways of the gospel, is an untoward entrance into a total relinquishment thereof. That therefore they might be acquainted with this danger, and be stirred up to avoid it, he gives them an account of those who, upon their non-proficiency in professing the gospel, end in a shameful and ruinous apostasy.

§3. (II.) The description of the *persons* spoken of is given in *five instances* of the evangelical privileges whereof they are made partakers; notwithstanding all which, and against their obliging efficacy to the contrary, it is supposed that they may wholly desert the gospel itself. And some things we may previously observe concerning this description of them *in general*;

1. The apostle designing to express the fearful state and judgment of these persons, describes them by such things as may fully evidence them to be not only *unavoidable*, but highly *righteous*.

2. All these privileges consist in certain operations of the Holy Ghost *peculiar* to the gospel dispensation; such as they neither were, nor could be, made partakers of in their Judaism. For the Spirit, in this sense, was "not received by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith," Gal. iii, 2. And a participation of that spirit, which was the great privilege of the gospel, was a testimony to them, that they were delivered from the bondage of the law,

3. Here is no express mention made of any covenant *grace* of which they were possessed, nor of any *duty* of faith which they had performed. Afterwards, when he comes to declare his *persuasion* concerning the Hebrews, that they were not such as those whom he had before described—such as might fall away to perdition—he observes, that they had such things as *accompanied salvation*; that is, from which salvation is inseparable; but he ascribes nothing of that nature to these in the text. He also describes them by their *duties of obedience*, their “work of faith and labor of love” towards the name of God, ver. 10. To which he adds, that in *their* preservation, the *faithfulness* of God was concerned; “God is not *unrighteous* to forget:” but with respect to those in the text, he doth not intimate the righteousness or faithfulness of God were any way engaged for their preservation, but rather the contrary. The whole description, therefore, refers to some gospel privileges, which professors in those days were promiscuously made partakers of; and what they were in particular we must now inquire.

§4. The *first* thing in the description is, that they were (*απαξ φωτισθεντες*) *once enlightened*; once baptized, saith the Syriac translation; but it was a good while *after* the writing of this epistle, at least an age or two, if not more, before this word was used mystically to express baptism. Wherefore to be “*enlightened*” in this place, (according to the import of the word) is to be instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, so as to have a *spiritual apprehension* thereof. And this is so termed on a double account:

1. On account of the *object*, or the things known and apprehended; for “life and immortality are *brought to light* through the gospel,” 2 Tim. i, 10. Hence it is called *light*. The world, without the gospel, is (*τοσος*;

αυχμησιν, 2 Pet. i, 19,) *a dark place*, wherein ignorance, folly, error, and superstition, dwell and reign. By the power of this darkness, are men kept at a distance from God, and know not whither they go. On this account is our instruction in the knowledge of the gospel called "*illumination*," because the gospel itself is light.

2. On account of the *subject*, or the mind itself whereby the gospel is apprehended; for the knowledge which is received thereby, expels that darkness, ignorance, and confusion, which the mind before was filled with. The knowledge, I say, of the gospel doctrine, concerning God's being in Christ reconciling the world to himself, the Redeemer's person, offices, mediation, and work, and similar articles of divine revelation, sets up a *spiritual light* in the minds of men, enabling them to discern what before, whilst alienated from the life of God through ignorance, was utterly concealed from them. Of this light and knowledge there are several *degrees*, according to the means and diligence of different persons, or of the same persons at different times. But a *competent measure* of knowledge, with respect to the fundamental principles of the gospel, is necessarily implied in the term "*illuminated*." Such are, at least, freed from the darkness and ignorance they once lived in. 2 Pet. i, 18—20.

§5. Thus much lies manifest in the text: but that we may more particularly discover the nature of this character of apostates, we may yet a little more distinctly express the *nature* of that illumination. And,

1. There is a knowledge of spiritual things that is *purely natural* and disciplinary, attained without any special assistance from the Holy Ghost. And this is evident in common experience, and especially among such who, casting themselves on the study of spiritual things, are yet utter strangers to all spiritual gifts.

Some knowledge of the scripture, and its contents, is certainly attainable, at the same rate of pains and study with that of any other art or science.

2. The "*illumination*" intended, being a gift of the Holy Ghost, differs from, and is exalted above, this knowledge that is *purely natural*; making nearer approaches to the light of spiritual things in their own nature than the other doth. It gives the mind some *satisfaction*, delight, and joy, in the things known. The light, it is true, shines in darkness, which does not fully comprehend it; yet that light, which represents the way of the gospel as a way of *righteousness*, 2 Pet. ii, 21, reflects upon the mind a peculiar regard for it. Moreover, the knowledge that is merely natural, hath little or *no power* on the soul, either to keep it from sin, or to constrain it to obedience. There is not a more secure and profligate generation of sinners in the world, than those who are under the sole conduct of it. But the *illumination* here intended, is attended with efficacy in the conscience, and the whole soul, producing abstinence from sin, and the performance of known duties. Hence persons under the power of it oftentimes walk blamelessly in the world. Besides, there is an alliance between spiritual gifts, that where any of them resides, it hath assuredly some other belonging to its train. Even a single talent is made up of many pounds. But the light and knowledge, which is merely natural, is *solitary*, destitute of the *society* and *countenance* of any spiritual gift whatever.

3. There is a saving, *sanctifying light* and knowledge, which *this* "spiritual illumination" riseth not up to. For though it transiently affect the mind with some glances of the beauty, glory, and excellency of spiritual things, yet it doth not give that direct, steady, institutive insight into them, which is obtained by

grace. See 2 Cor. iii, 8, chap. iv, 4—6. Neither doth it renew, or transform the soul into a conformity to the things known, by planting them in the will and affections, as a gracious saving light doth, 2 Cor. iii, 18; Rom. vi, 17; Rom. xii, 1. These things I judged necessary to be added, to clear the nature of the first character of apostates.

§6. The *second* thing asserted in the description of them, is, that “they have tasted of the heavenly gift.” The “*gift*” of God is sometimes taken for the *grant*, or giving *itself*, and sometimes for the *things given*. And so far as I can observe, (*δωρεα*) the *gift*, with respect to God, as denoting the *thing given*, is no where used but to signify the Holy Ghost, who is the gift of God signally under the New Testament. He is said to be (*της ἐκπαρίας*) *heavenly*, or *from heaven*, with respect to his work and effect, as opposed to *carnal* and *earthly*. But principally it regards his mission by Christ after his ascension into heaven, Acts ii, 33. Being exalted, and having received the promise of the Father, he sent his Spirit. The promise of him was, that he should be sent *from heaven*, or *from above*. If it be objected against this interpretation, that the Holy Ghost is expressly mentioned in the *next* clause, “and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,” we reply, that the following clause may be *exegetical* of this, declaring more fully and plainly what is here intended. So that nothing can be inferred from this consideration, to disprove an interpretation so suited to the sense of the place, and which the constant use of the word makes necessary. The Spirit of God, therefore, as bestowed for introducing the *new gospel state*, is the “heavenly gift” here intended. Thus our apostle warneth these Hebrews, that they “turn not away from him who speaketh from heaven;” chap. xii.

25, that is, Jesus Christ speaking in the dispensation of the gospel, by the Holy Ghost sent from heaven.

Let us now inquire what it is to "*taste*" of this heavenly gift. The expression is metaphorical, and signifies to make a trial or *experiment*, Ps. xxxiv, 8. "O *taste* and see that the Lord is good;" which Peter refers to, 1 Pet. ii, 3, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," or found it so by *experience*. It is, therefore, properly to *make trial* of any thing, whether it be received or refused; that therefore which is ascribed to these persons, is, that they had *an experience* of the power of the Holy Ghost, that "gift" of God in the gospel dispensation; a privilege which all men are not made partakers of. And by this "*taste*" they were convinced, that it was far more excellent than what they had been before accustomed to, although now they had a mind to leave the finest wheat for their old husks and acorns. Wherefore, although "*tasting*" convey a diminutive idea, if compared with the spiritual *eating, drinking, and digestion*, of gospel truths, in real believers; yet, absolutely considered, denoting that apprehension and experience of the excellency of the gospel, as administered by the Spirit, it is a great privilege, and may be called a *spiritual advantage*; the contempt of which will prove an unspeakable aggravation of sin, and the remediless ruin of all apostates.

§7. The *third* property whereby these persons are described is—"and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." As this is placed in the centre of the enumerated privileges, two preceding it and two following after, so it is the animating principle of them all. They are all effects of the Holy Ghost, and depend on the *participation* of him: and he may be "*received*"—either, as to personal inhabitation—or, as to spiritual operations. In the *first* way, the "world can-

not receive him," John xiv, 17, *the world*, as opposed to true believers; and therefore those here intended were not in *that* sense partakers of him. His operations respect his gifts. So to "partake of him," is to have a share or portion in what he distributes by way of spiritual gifts, answerable to that expression; "All these worketh that one and self-same Spirit, dividing unto every one severally as he will," 1 Cor. xii, 11. So Peter told Simon the magician, that he had *no part* in spiritual gifts, he was not "partaker of the Holy Ghost," Acts viii, 21. Wherefore, to be "partakers of the Holy Ghost," is to have a share in his spiritual operations.

But whereas the other things mentioned are also "gifts" or *operations* of the Holy Ghost, on what ground, or for what reason, is it mentioned here in particular, that they were made partakers of *him*? If his *operations* only be intended, were they not expressed in the *other* instances? We reply;

1. It is no unusual thing in scripture, to express the same thing under various notions, the more effectually to impress a sense of it on the mind; especially where an expression hath a singular emphasis, as this hath; for it is an exceeding aggravation of the sins of these apostates, that they were thus "partakers of the Holy Ghost."

2. It expresseth their own *personal interest* in these things; not only *objectively*, as they were proposed to them in the church, but *subjectively* in their own persons. It is one thing for a man to have a *share in*, and benefit by *the gift of the church*; another to be himself endowed with them.

3. It seems to remind them, in an especial manner, of the privileges they enjoyed under the gospel, above what they had in their Judaism. For, whereas then they had not so much as heard that there was an Holy

Ghost, that is, a blessed dispensation of him in spiritual gifts, Acts xix, 2, now they themselves, *in their own persons*, were made partakers of him, than which there could be no greater aggravation of their apostasy.

§8. *Fourthly*, it is added in the description, that they had tasted “the good word of God;” that is, the word of the gospel as preached. But it may be said, that they enjoyed the “word of God” in their state of Judaism. True, for “to them were committed the oracles of God,” Rom. iii, 20. But it is the word of God, *as preached in the dispensation of the gospel*, that is eminently thus called; and concerning *this* are deservedly spoken the most excellent things, Rom. i, 16; Acts xx, 32; Jam. i, 21. The word is said to be (*καλον*) good, desirable, amiable; as the word imports. The declaration made of the accomplishment of the promise of God in sending Jesus Christ for the redemption of the church, is here especially intended; which is elsewhere emphatically called (*ρημα κυριου*, 1 Peter i, 25,) “the word of the Lord.” So the promise of God in particular is called his “good word;” Jer. xxix, 10: “After seventy years I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you.”

Of this they are said *to taste*, as before, of the heavenly gift. The apostle, as it were, studiously keeps himself to this expression, on purpose to manifest he intendeth not those, who by faith do readily receive food, and live on Christ Jesus, as tendered in the word of the gospel; it is as if he had said, I speak not of those who have received and digested the spiritual food of their souls, and turned it into spiritual nourishment, but of such as have “tasted” so far of it, as that they ought to have desired it to grow thereby.

§9. *Lastly*, it is added, “And the powers of the world to come;” the mighty miraculous operations of

of the Holy Ghost. By "the world to come" our apostle intends, "the days of the Messiah," that being the usual name of it in the church at that time, as the new world which God had promised to create. Wherefore, these powers of the world to come were the gifts whereby these signs, wonders, and mighty works were then wrought by the Holy Ghost, see Joel ii, compared with Acts ii. These, the persons spoken of are supposed to have *tasted*, for the particle (*καί*) and refers to (*λαυσαμεν*) *tasted*. They had been wrought either by themselves, or by others in their sight, whereby they had an experience of the glorious and powerful working of the Holy Ghost in the confirmation of the gospel. Yea, I judge that they were personally partakers of these powers in the gift of tongues, and other miraculous operations, which was the highest aggravation of their apostasy; and what rendered their recovery impossible: for there is not in scripture an impossibility put upon the recovery of any, but such as peculiarly sin against the Holy Ghost; and although that guilt *may* be otherwise contracted, yet in none so signally as this of rejecting that truth which was confirmed by his mighty operations in them that rejected it, which could not be done without an ascription of his divine power to the devil. Yet I would not fix on extraordinary gifts to the exclusion of those that are ordinary; they also are of "the powers of the world to come;" so is every thing that belongs to the erection or preservation of the new world, or the kingdom of Christ. To the first setting up of a kingdom, great and *mighty power* is required, but being set up, the ordinary dispensation of power will preserve it; so is it in this matter; the extraordinary miraculous gifts of the Spirit were used in the erection of Christ's kingdom, but it is continued by *ordinary*

gifts, which therefore also belong "to the powers of the world to come." Hence it is evident, that the persons here intended, are not *sincere bellevers*, in the strict and proper sense of that name, at least they are not described *there* as such; so that from hence nothing can be concluded concerning *them* as to the possibility of their total and final apostasy. They are not said, for instance, to be *called* according to God's purpose; to be *born again*, not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God: to be *justified* or *sanctified*, or united to Christ; to be the sons of God by adoption: nor have they any other *characteristic* note of true believers ascribed to them. They are in the following verses compared to the ground on which the *rain often falls*, and beareth nothing but *thorns and briars*; but this is not the case with true believers. Whom then doth he intend? They were such who not long before were converted from Judaism to Christianity, upon the evidence of the truth of its doctrine, and the miraculous operations wherewith its dispensation was accompanied. He intends not the common sort of hearers, but such as obtained special privileges; they had found in themselves a convincing evidence that the kingdom of God was come to them; and they had some satisfaction in the glories of it. Such persons, as they have a work of light in their minds, may also have, according to the efficacy of their convictions, such a change in *affections* and conversation, as that they may be of great esteem among *persons*. Now it must needs be some horrible frame of spirit, some malicious enmity against the truth and holiness of Christ and the gospel, some violent love of sin and the world, that could turn off such persons as these from the faith, and blot out all that light and conviction of truth which they had received. But the

least grace is a better security for heaven, than the greatest gifts and privileges whatever.

§10. (III.) What is *supposed* concerning them? (*καὶ παραπεισόντας*) "If they shall fall away." Our old translations render it only, "If they shall *fall*," which expressed not the import of the word, and was liable to a sense not at all intended; for he doth not mean,— If they shall *fall into sin*; Peter fell into *sin*, and yet was "renewed again to repentance," and that speedily. Wherefore we may lay down this in the first place as to the sense of the words;—there is no particular sin that any man may fall into occasionally, through the power of temptation, that can cast the sinner under this condemnation, so that it should be impossible to renew him to repentance. It must, therefore, be a *course of sinning* that is intended. But there are various *degrees* herein also, yea, there are divers *kinds* of such courses in sin. A man may so fall into a way of sin, as still to retain in his mind such a principle of light and conviction, that may be suitable to his recovery. To exclude such from all hopes of repentance is expressly contrary to (Ezek. xviii, 21; Isa. lv, 7, &c.) the whole sense of the scripture. Wherefore men, after some conviction and reformation of life, may fall into corrupt and wicked courses, and make a long continuance in them, of which we have examples every day, (although it may be, all things considered, none to parallel that of Manassah:) yet whilst there is in such persons any seed of light, or conviction of truth, which is capable of revival, so as to put forth its power and efficacy in their souls, they cannot be looked upon as in the condition intended, though their case be extremely dangerous. Hence it will appear, what "falling away" it is that the apostle here intends. It must consist in a total renunciation of all

the constituent principles and doctrines of Christianity. Such, for instance, was the sin of them who relinquished the gospel to return to antiquated Judaism, by way of avowed and professed opposition. For the apostle discourseth concerning faith and obedience as *professed*, and so therefore also of their contraries.

§11. "It is *impossible* to renew them again unto repentance." The import of the word (*αδυνατον*) is dubious; some think an *absolute*, and others a *moral impossibility*, is intended thereby. Most fix upon the latter; so that it is a matter rare, difficult, and seldom to be expected—not absolutely "*impossible*." All future events depend on God, who alone doth necessarily exist. Other things may be, or may not be, as they respect him or his will. And so things that are future may be "*impossible*," either with respect to the *nature* of God, or his *decrees*, or his *moral rule*. I will not assert that the *first* is the meaning of the place; and as to the *second*, it cannot be; for the description here is of *qualifications*; whereas the decrees of God, (those sovereign acts of his will, which afford to us no rule of judgment) respect *persons* primarily, and not their qualifications. When, therefore, in matters of duty, God hath neither expressly *commanded* them, nor appointed *means* for the performance of them, then are we to look upon them as "*impossible*;" and, with respect to us, they are so absolutely, and so to be esteemed. This is the "*impossibility*" here principally intended. God gives law to *us* in these things, not to *himself*. It may be "*possible with God*," for aught we know, if there be not a contradiction in it to the holy properties of his nature; only he will not have us expect any such things from him, nor hath he *appointed any means* for us to endeavor it.

§12. That which is said to be thus "*impossible*," with respect to these persons, is "*to renew them again*

unto "*repentance*;" which denotes a *gracious change of mind*, on gospel principles and promises, leading the whole soul to sound conversion. This is the beginning of our turning unto God; and, without it, neither the will nor the affections will be engaged to him. "It is impossible (*ἀνακαινίσκειν*) to *renew*." The construction of the word is defective, and must be supplied either by (*οἱ*) *themselves*, or rather by (*τινας*) *some*, should renew them; which last I judge is intended. For the *impossibility* mentioned, respects the duty and endeavors of *others*. In vain shall their recovery be attempted by the use of any means. But what is it to be renewed *against*?—Our (*ἀνακαινισμός*) *renovation* consists in the restoration of the obliterated image of God in our natures, whereby we are dedicated *again* to him, from whom our sins had made a separation. And this is effected *really* and *internally*, in *regeneration* and *sanctification*; but *relatively* and *externally* in the *profession* and *pledge* of it. Which last implies the solemn confession of *faith* and *repentance* by Jesus Christ, with the seal of baptism as an exhibiting pledge of inward renovation. From this (*ἀνακαινισμός*) *renovation* they fell totally, renouncing him who is the author of it, his *grace* which is the cause of it, and the *ordinance* which is the pledge thereof.

Hence it appears what it is, (*καὶν ἀνακαινίσκειν*) *to renew them again*; viz. to bring them again into this state of profession, by a second baptism as a pledge thereof. For the most part, such persons so openly fall into blasphemies against the truth, and engage, *if they have power*, in such persecution of it, as that they give sufficient directions how others should behave towards them: so the ancient church was satisfied in the case of Julian. This is the sum; that it is impossible to *renew such apostates* unto repentance; that is, so to act towards

them, as to bring them to that repentance whereby they may be re-instated in their former condition.

§13. Hence sundry things may be observed for the clearing of the apostle's design in this discourse; as,

1. Here is nothing said concerning the acceptance or refusal of any upon repentance after any sin; it is not said, that whoever thus falls away, shall not, upon their repentance, be admitted into their former state in the church. But that such is the severity of God against them, that he will not again give them repentance unto life.

2. Here is nothing against such as have fallen into any great sin, or any course in sinning, and endeavor and desire sincerely to repent of their sins; yea, such a desire and endeavor exempt any one from the judgment here threatened. Nay, this passage is full of encouragement to such; for, whereas it is here declared concerning those who are rejected of God, that it is "impossible to renew them," or to do any thing that shall have a tendency to repentance; those who are sincerely exercised how they may attain thereunto, have no concernment in this commination, but evidently the door of mercy is still open to them. And although persons rejected of God may fall under convictions of their sin, attended with despair, which is to them a foresight of their future condition, yet they are utter strangers to the least attempt after repentance, on gospel terms. Wherefore the "impossibility" intended, of what sort soever it be, respects the severity of God, not in rejecting great sinners who seek after being renewed unto repentance (which would be contrary to innumerable promises;) but in giving up sinners of the stamp here mentioned, to that obduracy and obstinacy in sinning, to that blindness of mind and hardness of heart, which prevents their ever sincerely seek-

ing after repentance, or any divinely appointed means for that end.

§14. The *observations* that arise from the words thus explained, are the following:

1. The *severest comminations* are not only useful in preaching the gospel, but exceedingly *necessary* towards persons that are observed to be slothful in their profession. And the apostle would have us know, that

2. It is a great privilege and mercy to be *enlightened* with the doctrine of the gospel, by the effectual working of the Holy Ghost.—But

3. It is such a privilege as may be *lost*, and may *end* in the condemnation of those who were made partakers of it. And

4. Where there is a *total neglect* of the improvement of this privilege and mercy, the condition of such persons is *hazardous*, as inclining towards apostasy.

5. That all the gifts of God under the gospel are *heavenly* in a peculiar manner, John iii, 12, Eph. i, 3, in opposition to *earthly* things, Col. iii, 11, 12, and carnal ordinances, Heb. ix, 23. Let *them* beware by whom they are despised.

6. The Holy Ghost, for the purposes of revealing the mysteries of the gospel, and instituting the ordinances of spiritual worship, is the *great gift* of God under the New Testament.

7. There is goodness and excellency in this heavenly gift, which may be *tasted* or experienced, in some measure, by such as never receive it, in its life, power, and efficacy. They may taste of the *word* in its truth, and not in its power; of the *worship* of the church in its outward order, and not in its inward beauty; of the *gifts* of the church, and not its graces.

8. A *rejection* of the gospel, its truth and worship, after some experience had of their worth and excellency, is an high aggravation of sin, and a *certain pre-sage* of destruction.

9. The Holy Ghost is present with many, as to powerful operations, with whom he is not present as to gracious inhabitation; or many are made partakers of him in his *spiritual gifts*, who are never made partakers of him in his *saving graces*, Mat. vii, 22, 23.

10. There is a goodness and *excellency* in the *word of God* able to attract and affect the minds of some men, who yet never arrive at sincere obedience to it.

11. There is an *especial goodness* in the *word of promise* concerning Jesus Christ, and the declaration of its accomplishment.

VERSES 7, 8.

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

§1. Introduction. §2. (I.) The explanation in general. §3. In particular, the earth drinking in the rain that cometh oft upon it. §4. The similitude applied. §5. Bringing forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed. §6. Receiving a blessing §2, 8. Applied. §9—11. The barren ground, and its doom. §12 Its application to barren professors. §13—21. (II.) Observations. §22—25. Barrenness under the gospel is always accompanied with an increase of sin. §26, 27. God ordinarily rejects by degrees.

§1. **W**HAT the apostle had doctrinally instructed the Hebrews in before, he layeth before them in these verses, under an opposite similitude. For his design herein is to represent the condition of all sorts of persons who live under the dispensation of gospel truths, with the various events that befall them: he had before treated, *directly*, only of *unfruitful* and *aposta-*

tizing professors; but here, moreover, for greater illustration, he compriseth in his similitude the contrary state of true believers and *fruitful professors*, with their acceptance and blessing from the God of heaven. Contraries thus compared illustrate each other; and it is a mode of teaching at once compendious, plain, and instructive. Be it previously remarked, that here is not only a threatening of what *might* come to pass, but a particular prediction of what *would* come to pass, and a declaration of what was already in part accomplished; for by the "earth," he understands, in an especial manner, the church and nation of the Jews; this was God's vineyard, Isa. v, 7, 8. Hereunto he sent all his ministers, and last of all his Son, Mat. xxi, 35, Jer. ii, 21, and to them he calls, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord," Jer. xxii, 29. Upon "this earth" the rain often fell in the ministerial dispensation of the word to that people. With respect hereunto Christ says (ποσakis) "*how often* would I have gathered thy children," Mat. xxiii, 37. As here, the rain is said to fall (πολλakis) *often* upon it.

§2. (I.) This was the "earth," wherein were the plants of God's especial planting, and which was distributed into two lots; the *first* consisted of those who *believed* and brought forth the *fruits* of repentance, faith, and new obedience. These being effectually wrought by the power of God in the new creation, our apostle compares to the earth in the old creation, when it was first made, and blessed of God; then, in the first place, it brought forth (קצף Sept. βοτανην) *herb* meet for him that made and blessed it, Gen. i, 2. The Jews were still to be continued the vineyard of God, a field which he cared for; and that gospel church composed of believing Hebrews, and which brought forth fruit to the glory of God, was blessed of

him, being the remnant according to the election of grace, which obtained mercy when the rest were blinded, Rom. ix, 6, 7. The *other* lot, the *remainder* of this people, the residue of this "earth," was made up of—*obstinate unbelievers*, on the one hand, who pertinaciously rejected Christ and the gospel; and *hypocritical apostates* on the other, who having for a season embraced its profession, fell off again into their Judaism. All these the apostle compares to the earth put under the curse, when the covenant of God with the creation was broken by the sin of man. "The best of them was a *briar*, and the most upright of them as a *thorn* hedge." Of this barren earth, (these *unbelieving* and *apostate* Hebrews) the apostle affirmeth, that it was—"rejected," (*αδοκιμος*) "*not approved*" of God; and—"nigh unto cursing,"—and this *curse*, which was now very nigh to them, included not only *barrenness*, but also an irrevocable doom to destruction. Jerusalem, and consequently the whole church, was now to be made as Jericho; and the curse denounced was speedily to be executed; the land was to be alienated from them in point of right, and devoted to desolation—"Whose end is to be burned." An *universal desolation*, according to the prediction of our Savior, by fire and sword, representing the eternal vengeance they are liable to, was to come upon them. But whereas all things to the very last, happened to them *as types*, and the condition of the gospel churches is therefore represented in their sin and punishment; and whereas the subject in question is the common and constant concernment of all professors heedfully to consider; I shall open the words in their fuller latitude of signification, as being peculiarly instructive to us.

§3. The subject of the proposition in the similitude (ἡ γῆ) "*the earth*," represents the *hearts* and *minds* to whom the gospel is preached. So it is explained in our Lord's parable, wherein he expresses the word of the gospel as preached, by *seed*; and compares the hearers of it to several sorts of *ground*, whereinto that seed is cast. And the allusion is wonderfully apposite and instructive; for, *seed* is the principle of all animated nature. From the *vital seed* spring all growth and fruitfulness. So is the gospel word to all spiritual life, 1 Pet. i, 23. And hence believers are called *vines*, *plants* of God's planting, and the like. Again, as the earth is the only proper subject for seed to be put into, and alone is capable of the culture; so also of *itself*, it brings forth nothing good or useful. Upon its first creation it was impregnated, by the blessing of God, with all seeds of useful herbs and fruits; but after the entrance of sin, its womb was cursed with barrenness, and ever since it brings forth nothing of itself but thorns, and briars, and noxious weeds. And as among the weeds of unmanured earth, some are painted with alluring colors, but they are only weeds still; so among the fruits of unsanctified minds, some may carry a more specious appearance than others; but they are all, spiritually considered, no other still than sins and vices. Of this earth it is said, that it "drinks in the rain that comes often upon it." Hereby alone the earth, otherwise dry and barren, is impregnated and rendered fruitful. A communication of moisture being absolutely necessary for applying the nourishing virtue of the earth to the radical principles of all fruits whatever; therefore, before any *rain* fell for that purpose, God paused a *vapor* to supply the use of it, Gen. ii, 6. The rain *falls* on the ground, and that *often*, (*iteratis vicibus.*) The Land of Canaan is commended, that it

was not like the land of Egypt, where the "seed was sowed and watered with the foot; but was a land of hills and valleys, and did drink water of the rain of heaven," Deut. xi, 10, 11. Whilst they had these rains in their proper season, the land was *fruitful*; but man—! The application is but too easy. Again, the earth is said to *drink in the rain*. If it falls on *rocks* or stones, it runs off; but if on the earth it soaks in more or less, according to the quality of the soil. Its nature is to *suck in* the moistening rains, until it be, as it were, *inebriated*, Psal. lxxv, 10, "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it, thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settlest (*makest drunk*) the furrows thereof." Let us now *apply* the similitude.

§4. Some suppose that by the "rain," the gifts of the Holy Ghost are designed. For in the communication of them, the Holy Spirit is frequently said to be *poured out*, that is, as water or rain. But this rain is said to *fall often* on the earth, yea upon that earth which continueth *utterly barren*, by one shower after another; which cannot be accommodated to the gifts of the Spirit. For those *once* communicated, and not improved, were no more given in repeated showers. The administration of the *word* is therefore intended in the comparison; and this agrees with many other Scripture passages, Deut. xxxii, 2, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." And when God denies his word to any people, he says, "Upon them there shall be no rain," Ezek. xxi, 2, Amos vii, 16, the showers whereof are sometimes more soft and gentle, sometimes more earnest and pressing. In brief, not to enlarge on the allegory, the word of the gospel is to the souls of men, as the rain to the barren earth.

This rain is said to *fall often* on the earth, which may be considered—either, with respect to the special concernment of these Hebrews—or, to the ordinary dispensation of the gospel. In the *former* way, it expresseth the *frequent addresses* made to the Jews in the ministry of the prophets, and that of Christ himself. Take it in the *latter* way, for the dispensation of the word in general, the *manner* of it, with frequency and urgency, is included. Where the Lord Christ sends the gospel to be preached, it is his will that it should be done “instantly, in season, and out of season,” that it may come as abundant showers of rain on the earth. This rain is said to be *drunk in*; which intends no more but the *outward hearing* of the word; for it is ascribed to them who continue utterly barren, and who are therefore left to fire and destruction. But as it is the natural property of the earth to *receive in* the water poured on it; so men do, in a sense, receive the doctrine of the gospel, when their natural faculties apprehend and *assent* to it, though it produce no truly spiritual effects in them. There are indeed in the earth *rocks* and *stones*, on which the rain makes no impression, but the hearers *in common* are said to *drink it in*; but the *others* shall not escape their appointed judgment.

§5. It “*bringeth forth*,” (τινύσκει βολανν) This word properly signifies the “bringing forth” of a pregnant woman; and the apostle James, by an allusion inimitably striking, compares the work of lust in a tempted soul to an *adulterous conception*. The *seeds* of sin are cast into the mind and will by temptation, where, after they are cherished, *sin itself*, that ugly monster, comes forth into the world. So the earth is said to “bring forth,” as a fruitful womb in its appointed season. And therefore when the apostle speaks of the

other sort, verse 8, he changeth his expression for such a word (εμφερα) as may suit a deformed and monstrous production. But the native power of the earth, being cherished by the rain that falls on it, *brings forth*, as from a teeming womb, the fruits of those seeds it is possessed with. It bringeth forth "*herbs*," here used singularly, (βοτάνην, *herbam*) *herb*; the word signifies such green herbs as are usually produced by *careful culture* for the use of *men*, and not of their cattle. The same with the Hebrew word (אֶשְׂרָא) Gen. i, 2, which denotes all sorts of useful green herbs; whether for *medicine*, for *food*, or for *ornament*.—"Meet:" (εὐθελον both *opportuna* and *accommoda*) *Seasonable* and *useful*:—it makes no delays, but brings forth in its proper *season*, when its owners and tillers have just ground to expect it, Psal. i, 4, *useful* and *profitable*; and the fruits of the earth are eminently so, when produced in due season. "*Meet for them by whom it is dressed*," or tilled. "*Even by whom*," or, by whom it is also tilled. The particle (καί) is not insignificant, but declares an *addition* of culture to the rain. For besides the falling of the rain on the earth, there is likewise need of *culture*, for the production of herbs that shall be seasonable and profitable unto men. Otherwise, for one useful herb, it will bring forth many weeds. (Δι ἑς) *for whom*, or *by whom*; there is no need to distinguish in this place between *owner* and *dresser*; for God, as he is the great husbandman, is both. He is the Lord of the vineyard, and he dresseth the vines, that they may bring forth fruit, John xv, 1, &c.

§6. The ground thus made fruitful "receiveth blessing from God." He not only *owns* and approves of it, not being ashamed that it should be looked on as *his*; as opposed to the *rejection* of the barren ground

afterwards mentioned, but also useth watchfulness and *diligent care* about it. God watcheth over such a field or vineyard, to keep it night and day that none should hurt it, watering it every moment, and purging its vines, to make them yet more fruitful; as opposed to being "nigh unto cursing," that is, wholly neglected, or left to salt and barrenness. And this blessing further includes, a *final preservation* from all evil, as opposed to the burning up of the barren earth with the thorns and briars that grow upon it.

§7. The *application* of the comparison, though not expressed, is plain and easy. The ground thus dressed, bearing fruit, and blessed of God, are true and sound believers. So our Savior interprets a similar comparison, Mat. xiii. They are "such" as receive the word of God into good and honest hearts, and bring forth the fruits of it in several degrees. There is included also the *manner how* they bring forth the fruits intended; and that is, that they bring forth in their *lives* what was before conceived and cherished in their *hearts*. They have the "root in themselves" of what they bring forth. They "bring forth," as the word signifies, the fruit of an inward conception. The doctrine of the gospel, cast into their hearts, is not only *rain* but *seed* also. This is cherished by *grace*, as *precious seed*, and, as from a natural root or principle in the heart, brings forth *precious fruit*. The "herbs" or fruits intended, are elsewhere called the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, of holiness, and the like; signifying all we do in compliance with the will of God, in the course of our profession and obedience. All effects of faith and love, of mortification and sanctification, that are holy in themselves, and useful to others, whereby we express the truth and power of the doctrine we profess, are the fruits and herbs intended.

When our hearts are made in their measure *holy*, and our lives *useful* by the gospel, then are we *fruitful*.

These herbs are said to be "meet for them *by* whom, or *for* whom, the earth is dressed." As it is neither useful nor safe to press similitudes beyond their principal scope, by introducing every minute circumstance into the comparison; so we must not neglect what is instructive in them, especially what hath countenance in other places of scripture, as in the present case. Wherefore,

§8. To clear the application of this part of the similitude we observe:

1. That God himself is the *great husbandman*, John xv, 1, and all believers are his husbandry, 1 Cor. iii, 9. He is so the husbandman as to be the sovereign Lord and *owner* of this field, and he puts workmen in to dress it.

2. It is God himself who taketh care for the watering and *dressing* of this field. He dealeth with it as a man doth with a field that is his own. The dispensation of the word and the communication of the Spirit to the church, with all other means of light, grace, and growth, depend all on his care, and are all supremely from him.

3. This tilling or *dressing* of the earth, which is superadded to the rain, or mere preaching of the gospel, may be referred to the *ministerial application* of the word to the souls and consciences of men, in the dispensation of all gospel ordinances;—the administration of the censures and discipline of the church; and—wisely ordered afflictions and trials. By these he purgeth his vine that it may bring forth yet more fruit; that is, he trieth, exerciseth, and thereby *improveth* the faith and graces of believers, 1 Pet. i, 7, Rom. v, 3—5, Jer. i, 2—4.

4. God *expecteth fruit* from this field, being his own, and for which he so careth. "I looked for grapes," Isa. v, 2. He sends his servants to receive the fruits of it, Mat. xxi, 34. Though he stands in no need of our goodness, which cannot extend to him; we cannot profit him as a man may profit his neighbor, nor will he grow rich with our substance; yet he is graciously pleased to regard the fruit of gospel obedience, the fruit of faith and love, of righteousness and holiness, as that by which he will be glorified; "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," John xv, 3, Mat. v, 16.

5. These fruits brought forth, God *approveth* of them, and farther *blesseth* the bearers of them. He hath respect to them and their offering, Gen. iv, 4. He graciously increaseth their fruitfulness; every branch in the vine bearing fruit he purgeth, that it may bring forth *more fruit*, John xv, 2. He multiplies the seed sown, and increaseth the fruit of their righteousness, 2 Cor. ix, 10. He so *blesseth* them, that their graces and fruit shall more and more *abound*. They shall be flourishing even in old age, and shall bring forth more fruit to the end.

§9. "But that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." In the foregoing verse the apostle sheweth, how it would fall out with that part of the Jewish church which embraced the gospel, and brought forth the fruits of faith and obedience. God would accept of them, own, preserve, and bless them. Now follows the end of unbelievers and apostates, which agrees with the symbolical action of our Savior in cursing the *barren fig-tree*, whereby the same thing was represented, Mat. xxi, 19; which was, that the persecuting, unbelieving church of the Jews, was about to be con-

signed to a perpetual barrenness. They *would* not before bear any fruit, and they *shall* not hereafter; being hardened by the just judgment of God to their everlasting ruin. The apostle supposeth these also to be "earth," as well as the other sort; all men to whom the gospel is preached are by nature in the same condition; none of them, therefore, have any reason to boast. On *this* ground also the *rain often falls*. Awful to think! those who continue unprofitable under the means of grace, have oftentimes the preaching of the word as plentifully, and as long continued to them, as the most thriving and fruitful in obedience. And herein lies no small evidence that these things will be called over again another day, to the glory of God's grace and righteousness.

§10. It bringeth forth (*ακανθας και τριβυλους*) "*thorns and briars*;" all sorts of sins, all unfruitful works, Rom. vi, 21, Ephes. v, 2. And the principal reason why they are here compared to thorns and briars, is with respect to the curse that came on the earth by sin. "Cursed be the ground, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee," Gen. iii, 17, 18. Whereunto barrenness, or unaptness for better fruits, is added, Gen. iv, 12. Hence the earth of itself would bring nothing but thorns and briars, at least they would be absolutely prevalent over all its productions. So the heart of man by nature is wholly overrun with sinful imaginations, and his life with vicious actions, Gen. vi, 5, Rom. ii, 10—13. When a man hath a field overgrown with thorns and briars, serving for no good use, and affording no profit, he resolves to dig them up, or to set fire to them. Of no other use are the sins of men in the world. All the works of darkness are *unfruitful*, Ephes. v, 2. The world is no way benefitted by them; never was a man better for his own or

another man's sin. They are really *noxious*, choking and hindering good fruits, that otherwise would thrive in the field. All the confusion, disorders, and devastations that are in the world, are from them alone. In general, therefore, it is *all sorts of sins*, works of darkness, works of the flesh, &c. that are intended by these *thorns and briars*. But yet, I presume, the apostle hath regard to the sins which the obstinate Jews were then in an especial manner guilty of, and which would be the cause of their sudden destruction. Now those were, as appeareth from the whole epistle, and recorded matter of fact, *unbelief, impenitency, and apostasy*. The "thorns and briars," which were the *fuel* wherein was kindled the fire of God's indignation, were their sins against the gospel. Either, they would not give their assent to its truth—or, would not amend their lives according to its doctrine—or, would not abide with constancy to its profession. These are the special sins, which cast those Hebrews, and will cast all that are like them, into the dangerous condition here described.

Chrysostom puts a great emphasis upon the difference of the words used by the apostle to express the *manner* of producing the good and bad fruit. The former (*τικισα*) denotes a natural conception and production in due order, time, and season; the latter (*εκφυσα*) denotes a casting of them out in abundance, not only without the use of means, but against it. The heart of man needs not to be impregnated with any adventitious seed, to make it thrust forth all sorts of sins, or to make it fruitful in unbelief and impenitency; the womb of sin will be, of its own accord, continually teeming with these things.

§11. This being the condition of the unfruitful ground, the apostle affirms three things concerning it.

First, it is "*disapproved*;" trial had been made by the application of suitable means, but whereas nothing succeeded, it is to be *rejected, disapproved*, laid aside as to any farther endeavors to make it fruitful.

Secondly, It is said to be "*nigh unto cursing*." The husbandman doth not presently destroy a piece of ground, but lets it lie neglected, farther to discover its own barrenness; and thereby declares his resolution to lay it waste. But before that is done, he gathers out of it all the good plants and herbs that yet remain in it, and transplants them into a better soil. Then follows his casting down its fences, and laying it waste, that all the beasts of the field may lodge therein and prey upon it. To complete the desolating scene, all means of doing it good are withheld, watering, manuring, &c. and hereby it becomes like to the barren wilderness, which no man careth for; it is *nigh unto that condition* wherein it shall not be known that it ever belonged to his possession. "*Nigh unto cursing*." As *blessing* implies an *addition of good*, so *cursing* implies the removing of all kindness, and a devoting to destruction.

Lastly, It is added, "Whose end is to be burned;" fire makes a total and dreadful destruction of all combustible things to which it is applied. God will not only shew his dissatisfaction in such barren ground, by his neglect of it, but his vengeance in its destruction. And it seems to be thus expressed, to intimate the temporal destruction of the obstinate Jews, and the eternal destruction of all unbelievers.

§12. The *application* of this part is obvious; God, the great husbandman and owner of the vineyard, would deal with the impenitent and unbelieving Hebrews, with answerable severity:

First, he tried them, and that for a long season, by the preaching of the gospel. The rain fell oft upon them, for the space of *about thirty-six* years. God tried, by outward means, to make them fruitful, to bring them to faith, repentance, and obedience; but after this long trial, it appeared that they multiplied, as it were, under his hand, the thorns and briars of their unbelief, and all sorts of provoking sins. Wherefore, God rejects them, declares that his soul had no pleasure in them, and that he would be at no farther cost about them. Thus he dealt with the Hebrews shortly after this admonition, and thus he will deal with unprofitable hearers and apostates. There is *a time* after which he casts them out of his care, and will provide no more for them; and if they any more enjoy the word, it is by accident, for the sake of some who are approved, but *they* shall receive no advantage by it, seeing they are no longer God's husbandry.

Secondly, on this rejection of them, they were "*nigh unto cursing*;" that is, were so disposed of, as that the destroying curse of God might come upon them. He had now anathematized them, or devoted them to destruction; and therefore had given them up to all the ways and means whereby it might infallibly overtake them. For, as he gathered all the good from amongst them, and planted them in the Christian church; so he still deals with all the apostate churches before their utter destruction, Rev. xviii, 4. He then took away their fences, casting them out of his protection, inasmuch that when they were destroyed, the General of the Roman army acknowledged that God had so infatuated them, that their impregnable holds and forts were of no use to them. To this we may add, that he granted them no more use of means for their conversion. Thenceforwards they fell into all manner of

sins, confusions, and tumults, which occasioned their ruin. After the like manner will God deal with any other people whom he rejects, for *their* rejection of the gospel. And the world hath no small reason to tremble at the apprehension of such a condition.

Thirdly, in the end, this whole barren earth was *burned up*. Primarily, this respects the destruction of Jerusalem, which ensued not long after, when the temple, and city, and people, and country, were all devoured by fire and sword, Matt. xxiv, 1. But yet this, like the destruction of Sodom, was but an *emblem* of the future judgment. Hypocrites, unbelievers, and apostates are to have *another* end than what they fall into in this world; an end, wherein their eternal condition shall be immutably stated, in the fire prepared for the devil and his angels; a fire that shall never be quenched. This final destruction of all unprofitable hearers, unbelievers, and apostates, is that which is principally intended in the words.

§13. (II.) *Obs.* 1. The minds of men, by nature, are universally and equally barren, with respect to works of righteousness and holiness, meet for, and acceptable to God. They are all, as the earth, under the curse. Men differ as to intellectual abilities, and natural inclinations; but as to a principle of living unto God, our nature is *equally* corrupt in all. All spiritual differences between men are from the power and grace of God.

§14. *Obs.* 2. The word of God, in the preaching of it, being compared to rain, we may observe that the dispensation of it to men is an effect of the sovereign power and pleasure of God. There is nothing in nature that God assumeth as his prerogative more than this of giving rain. The first mention of it in the world is in these words, "The Lord hath not caused it

to rain upon the earth," Gen. ii, 8. It is a great pledge of his providence and goodness: "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and *gave rain from heaven*," Acts xiv, 17, and Matt. v, 26. He calls his people to say in their hearts, "Let us fear the Lord *who giveth rain*," Jer. v, 24. And he exerciseth his sovereignty in giving it; "I caused it to rain upon one city, and not to rain upon another; one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered; so two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water," Amos iv, 7, 8. Thus it is in the dispensation of the gospel to nations, cities, places, and persons; in which we are constrained to acknowledge a distinguished sovereignty. His *great design* is, the conversion, edification, and eternal salvation of his chosen. In whatever place or nation, time, or age, he hath any of his elect, he will provide that the gospel of peace be preached to them; or else, by one providence or another, will snatch them like brands out of the fire, and convey them under the showers of his word. The gospel, therefore, doth not pass up and down the world by *chance*, but, like the falling of the rain, is regulated by the sovereign wisdom and pleasure of God. And the divine sovereignty is equally evident in his calling and sending persons to dispense his heavenly blessings.

§15. *Obs. 3.* God ordereth things in his sovereign, unsearchable providence, so as that the gospel shall be sent to, and in its administration shall find admittance in what places, and at what times it pleaseth him; even as he orders the rain to fall on one place and not on another. It were an easy matter to evince, by evident instances, that the principal national revolutions which have been in the earth, have been subservient to the purpose of God in this matter.

§16. *Obs. 4.* It is the duty of all to whom God commits the dispensation of his word, to be diligent, watchful; instant in their work, that their doctrine may, as it were, continually drop and distil upon their hearers.

In a hot season a shower or two do but increase the drought, affording matter for new exhalations, which fly off, accompanied with some of the remaining moisture of the earth. Of no other use is that dead and *lazy kind of preaching* wherewith some satisfy themselves, and would force others to be contented. The apostles, when this work was committed to them, would not be diverted from a constant attendance to it, even by any other Christian duty, much less any common occasion of life, Acts vi, 4. See what a charge our apostle gives Timothy to this purpose, 2 Tim. iv, 1—3. And a great example hereof we have concerning his own ministry in Asia, Acts, xx. I confess, I cannot but admire to think what some men conceive concerning either him or themselves. Can they say, that from the first of their coming into their dioceses or dignities, parishes or places, they have thus behaved themselves? Have they so taught, preached, and warned, with *tears*, night and day, all sorts of persons to whom they suppose themselves related? However, the discharge of this work is not to be measured by the *frequency of preaching*, but in a purpose of heart to lay out themselves in the ministerial work on all occasions, resolving to spend and be spent therein.

§17. *Obs. 5.* Attendance to the word preached, hearing it with some diligence, and giving it a kind of reception, make no great difference among men; being common to them who never become fruitful. I intend not only those who only hear the word, and no more; such persons are like stones, on which the rain,

however often it fall on them, makes no impression: but those are intended who, in some measure, receive it, and drink it in. They give it an entrance into their *understandings*, and become doctrinally acquainted with the truth of the gospel. And they give it some entrance, perhaps, into their affections, whence they are said to *receive the word with joy*. They may do many things gladly; and yet, solemn to think, they may be still barren.

§18. *Obs. 6.* God is pleased to exercise much patience towards those whom he grants the mercy and privilege of this word. He does not presently proceed against them for their barrenness, but stays until the rain hath *often fallen* upon the ground. But there is an appointed period, beyond which he will wait no more.

§19. *Obs. 7.* Where God grants means there he expects fruit. Few men consider what is the state of things whilst the gospel is preached to them: some utterly disregard it, any farther than as it is suited to their carnal interests and advantages. But few, there are who seriously consider what is the errand it comes upon, and what the work is which God hath in hand thereby. In brief, he is by it *watering, manuring, cultivating*, the souls of men, that they may bring forth fruit to his praise and glory. His business by it is to make them holy, humble, self-denying, useful, upright, pure in heart and life, that they may abound in good works, and be like himself. To effect these important ends are the holy means appointed perfectly suitable; and therefore God is *justly* said to expect *these* fruits where he grants *those* means.

§20. *Obs. 8.* Duties of gospel obedience are fruits meet for God; things that have a proper and especial tendency to his glory. As the precious fruits of the

earth which the husbandman waiteth for, are meet for his use; so do these duties of gospel obedience answer all the appointed and noble ends of God's glory in the world. "Hereby," saith our Savior, "is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit." His will of *command* is fulfilled thereby; and there is in them an expression of the *nature*, power, and efficacy of the grace of God, whereby also he is glorified, for "he doth all things to the praise of the glory of his grace," Ephes. i, 6. They also express and manifest the efficacy of the mediation of the Lord Christ, in the obedience of his life, and the sacrifice of his death. Besides, God in them extends his care, goodness, and love to others. Their charity, their compassion, their love, their bounty, shall help and relieve others in wants, streights, sorrows, imprisonment, exile, or the like. And so it is in all other cases; their meekness, their patience, their forbearance, which are of these fruits, shall be useful to others under their weaknesses and temptations. Their zeal, their labor of love, in teaching and instructing, or preaching the word, shall be the means of others' conviction and conversion.

And, indeed, this usually is the first thing which affects the minds of the saints, in any relief that God is pleased to hand out to them by the means of others. They admire and bless God in his grace towards them, by whose kindness and compassion they are relieved; so is God glorified by these fruits.

§21. Qba. 9. Wherever there are any sincere fruits of faith and obedience found in the hearts and lives of professors, God graciously accepts and bleseeth them. Nothing is so *small*, if it be *sincere*, but he will accept; and nothing so *great*, but he hath an overflowing reward for it. Nothing shall be lost that is done for God; a cup of cold water, the least refreshment given

to any for his sake, shall be had in remembrance. All we have and are, is antecedently due to him, so as that there can be no merit in any thing we do. But we must take heed, lest, whilst we deny the *pride of merit*, we lose not the *comfort of faith*, as to the acceptance of our duties. It is a fruit of the mediation of Jesus Christ, that we may "serve God without fear, in righteousness and holiness all our days." But if we are always uncomfortably anxious whether what we do be accepted with God or no; how do we serve him without *fear*? This is the worst kind of fear we are obnoxious to; most dishonorable to God, and discouraging to our own souls, 1 John iv, 18. For how can we dishonor God more than by judging, that when we do our utmost sincerely in his service, yet he is not well pleased with us, nor doth accept of our obedience? Is not this to suppose him severe, angry, always displeased, ready to take advantage; one whom nothing will satisfy? Such thoughts are the marks of the *wicked servant* in the parable, Luke xix, 20, 21, 22. Where then is that infinite goodness, grace, condescension, love, and compassion, which are so essential to his nature, and which he hath declared himself so to abound in? And if it be so, what use is there of the mediation and intercession of Jesus Christ? What benefit in the promises of the covenant? And what is there remaining that can encourage us to duties of obedience? Merely to perform them because we cannot do otherwise, a servile compliance with our conviction, is neither acceptable to God, nor any ways comfortable to our own souls. Who would willingly lead such a life in this world, to be always laboring and endeavoring, without the least satisfaction that what he does will either please them by whom he is set on work, or any way turn to his own account?

Yet such a life do men lead who are not persuaded that God graciously accepts of what they sincerely perform. A suspicion to the contrary ariseth in opposition to the fundamental principle of true religion; "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi.

§22. *Obs.* 10. Whilst the gospel is preached unto men, they are under their great trial for eternity. The application that is made to them is for an *experiment* how they will prove. If they acquit themselves in faith and obedience, they receive "the *blessing*" of eternal life from God; if they prove barren and unprofitable, they are *rejected* and *cursed* by him. No other experiment shall be made upon them, Heb. x. Their season of enjoying the gospel is *their day*, when *that* is past, the night comes wherein they cannot work. When these "bellows are burnt, and the lead is consumed, the founder founding in vain, men are rejected as reprobate silver, never to be tried any more." We may do well to consider these things, for our concernment in them is very great. We are all made for an eternal state, to exist in blessedness or woe. Men may live like beasts, and wish that they may die like them also; but we are all made for another design, and must all of us "stand in our *eternal lot* at the end of the days," Dan. xii, 13. And this depends on what we do in this life. There is neither wisdom nor knowledge, duty or obedience, in the grave whither we are going. As the tree falls so it must lie; nothing interposeth to alter our state and condition between death and judgment. The doctrine of *purgatory* was an invention of Satan, to delude the souls of men with hopes of relief, when all means and ways of it were irrecoverably past. The trial of our future state is made by the preaching

of the gospel to us; and our compliance with it, or rejection of it. It was a fruit of infinite grace, condescension, and mercy, to grant a *new trial* to sinners under the curse, to which we all cast ourselves. There God might have left us: so he dealt with the sinning angels, whom he spared not. And had he dealt so with all mankind, who could say to him, "what dost thou?" And it is what we must all answer for, that when we were fallen under the sentence of the holy and righteous law, God would propose any terms of peace and reconciliation to us, and give us a *second trial*. Besides, the *special way* of this trial doth most eminently set out this grace and mercy; a way so full of infinite wisdom, goodness, love, mercy, and grace! When the gospel is preached to sinners, God telleth them, that although they have destroyed themselves, and are ready every moment to sink into eternal misery, yet he will, out of infinite grace and compassion, *try them once more*, by the holy terms of the gospel. Would men be so careless, negligent, formal, and slothful, as for the most part they are, under the hearing of the word, if they duly remembered that it is their *trial for eternity*: and they know not how soon it may be over. If we lose this season we are gone;—for ever lost! It is, therefore, our wisdom to know how far our fruitfulness in faith, repentance, and obedience answers the rain and dressing we have had by the dispensation of the word. The axe is laid at the root of the tree, if we bring not forth good fruit, we shall, ere long, be hewn down and cast into the fire. It is assuredly high time that we call ourselves to a strict account concerning it.

§23. *Obs. 11.* Barrenness under the gospel is always accompanied with an *increase of sin*. The ground which brings not forth herbs meet for them by

whom it is dressed, thrusts forth thorns and briars. Let it be observed, that spiritual barrenness never goes alone, abounding in sin will soon follow it. Yea, there are no sinners like them, nor sin like theirs, by whom the means are rejected, or not improved. These Hebrews to whom the gospel has been preached, proved a generation no less wicked than that before the flood, insomuch that their own historian affirms, that he verily believed, "If the Romans had not come and destroyed them, God would have poured fire and brimstone upon them from heaven as he did upon Sodom." When men have rejected the last means of their spiritual healing, and the restraints of sin, what can be expected from them but an outrage in sinning? What remains to set any bounds to the lusts of men? Hence you may find more honesty and uprightness, a more conscientious abstinence from sin, wrongs, and injuries, more effects of moral virtue among Heathens and Mahometans, than among persons who, being unprofitable under the gospel, do thereby tacitly reject it. No fields in the world are fuller of thorns and briars, than those of people, nations, or churches, who profess themselves to be Christians and are not. Suppose two fields equally barren, let one of them be tilled and dressed, and the other be left to its own state and condition. When the field that hath been tilled shall be forsaken for its barrenness, trash of all sorts, incomparably above that which was never tilled, will rise up in it. This is what at this day is such a scandal to Christianity, which hath broken up the flood-gates of atheism, and let in a deluge of profaneness on the world. No sinners like to barren Christians. Heathens would blush, and infidels stand astonished, at the things they practise in the light of the sun. There was sleeping in the bed of uncleanness, drunkenness, and

revelling among the Heathens. But our apostle, who knew well enough their course, affirms of them, that they who sleep, sleep in the *night*, and they who are drunken, are drunken in the *night*, 1 Thes. v, 7. They did their shameful things in darkness and secrecy, Eph. v, 11, 12. But, alas! among Christians, who have directly and wilfully despised the healing power and virtue of the gospel; these are works of the *day*, proclaimed as in Sodom, and the perpetration of them is the business of men's lives. If you would see the greatest representation of hell upon the earth, go into an apostate church, or to persons that have had the word preached to them, or have heard of it sufficiently for their conviction, but are not healed. The face of things in Christianity at this day is, on this account, dreadful, and bespeaks desolation to lie at the door; the ground whereunto the waters of the sanctuary do come, and is not healed, is left to salt and barrenness for ever.

§24. And be it known, that it is a *righteous* thing with God judicially to give up such persons to all manner of filthy sins and wickedness.

By *leaving them* wholly to themselves, taking off all effectual restraint from them; so spake our blessed Savior of the Pharisees, "*Let them alone,*" saith he, "*they are blind leaders of the blind,*" Mat. xv, 14. Reprove them not, help them not, let them alone to take their own course. So saith God of Israel, when given up to sin and ruin: "*Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone,*" Hosea iv, 14; Ezekiel xxix, 13. And it is the same judgment which he denounceth against unprofitable hearers of the gospel, Rev. xxii, 2, "*He who is unjust let him be unjust still, and he who is filthy let him be filthy still;*"—go on now in your sins and filthiness without restraint. Now when men

are thus left to themselves, it were hardly to be conceived what an outrage and excess of sin the corrupted (nay, I may add, the cursed) nature of man will run into, were not the world daily filled with the fruits and tokens of it. And God doth righteously thus withdraw himself *more absolutely* from gospel despisers, than he doth from pagan infidels, whom by various actions of his providence he keeps within bounds of sinning subservient to his holy ends. God pours on such persons a spirit of slumber, or gives them up to a profound security, so that they take notice of nothing in the works or word of God that should stir them up to amendment, or restrain them from sin. Nothing shall rouse them up, though it thunder over their heads, and the tempests of judgment fall so near them, as if they were personally concerned, yet they cry, Peace, peace. When the word is preached to them, or they hear by any means the curse of the law, yet they bless themselves as those who are altogether unconcerned in it. Hence God gives them up to all the ways whereby they may be farther fortified in their security; love of sin, contempt of ministers, carnal and atheistical confidence, the society of other presumptuous sinners, strengthening their hands in their abominations; a present supply of worldly things with which they feed their lusts, and the like, shall all in righteous judgment contribute to their security. God absolutely and irrecoverably gives them up to *extreme obstinacy*, Isa. vi, 8—10. When provoking sinners fall under this "curse" they are totally blinded and hardened in sin, to their eternal ruin. Now when God thus deals with men, who will not be healed and reformed by the gospel, can any thing else ensue but that they will give up themselves to all wicked and filthy ways with greediness? And they

are even blind themselves, who see not this to be the condition of many in the world at this day.

§25. The righteousness of such a rejection may farther appear when we observe, that there are sins *peculiar* to these barren sorts of persons, and so also *aggravations* of sins of which others are not guilty. Now although it be not for us to know times and seasons, or to set bounds to the patience of Christ, yet have we *just reason* to dread the speedy breaking forth of his severity in judgment, spiritual or temporal, upon most nations and churches that are called by his name. It is, therefore, the incumbent duty of those who make a profession of the gospel, in a peculiar manner, to inquire diligently, whether there be growing, in their *own hearts and ways*, any such things as are usually consequent to barrenness under the word. If it prove so upon search, they may justly fear that God is going to revenge upon them for the neglect of the gospel, and unprofitableness under it. I shall, therefore, name some of those *sins and ways* with respect to which persons ought to be exceeding jealous over themselves: as,

1. An allowed indulgence to some *secret*, carnally pleasant, or seemingly profitable sin or *lust*. If this, reader, be your case, it may be there is more in it than you are aware of; nor will your deliverance from it be so easy as you may imagine. God seldom gives up men to such a way, but as an effect of his displeasure against their barrenness. He declares therein that he doth not approve of their profession. Take heed lest it prove an *entrance* into a more dreadful judgment. Whatever, therefore, it be, let it not seem *small* in your eyes. There is more evil in the allowed sin of a professor, willingly continued in, than in the loud and great provocation of open sinners. For, besides other aggravations, it includes a mocking of God.

2. A constant neglect of *secret duties*. I mean such an omission of duties as is *general*; where men seldom or never perform them but when they are pressed by outward occasions. The principal character of an hypocrite is, that he will not pray *always*; nor can there be any greater evidence of a personal barrenness than this neglect. A man may have a *ministerial* fruitfulness, and yet lie under a *personal* barrenness; so he may have a *family* usefulness, and yet be *personally* thrifless. And negligence in private duties is the greatest evidence of that dangerous state. Men may especially know (if they examine impartially) when those sins are consequences of their barrenness, and to be reckoned among the "thorns and briars" intended in the text. If these things proceed from God's dereliction of them, *because* of their barrenness, they will find, whatever they may think or resolve, that their recovery is not so easy. God will make them sensible how foolish and evil a thing it is to forsake him under the means of fruitful obedience. They may think, like Samson, to go forth and do as at other times; but they shall quickly find their locks cut, and their spiritual strength so decayed, that they have no power to execute what they thought would prove so easy to them at any time. They will find their wills and affections so entangled and engaged, that without a fresh abundant supply of grace, scarce less than that administered in their first conversion, they cannot be delivered. By these, and the like considerations, may professors try their own concernment in this commination.

§26. *Obs.* 10. Ordinarily God proceeds to the rejection and destruction of barren professors *by degrees*; although they are seldom sensible of it until they fall irrecoverably into ruin. This ground is first *disap-*

proved or rejected, then it is *nigh* unto cursing, then the *curse* ensues, after which it is *burned*. And God thus proceeds with them in compliance with his own patience, goodness, and long suffering, whereby they ought to be led to repentance. This is the natural tendency of the goodness and patience of God towards sinners, though it be often abused, Rom. ii, 4, 5. Let men and their sin be what they will, God will not deal otherwise with them, than as becomes his own goodness and patience. And this is that property of God, without a due conception of which we can never understand aright his righteousness in the government of the world. Ignorance of the nature of it, and how *essential* it is to the divine Being, is the occasion of security in sinning, and the boldest atheism, Eccles. viii, 11—13; 2 Pet. iii, 3, 4. Moreover, God will proceed thus gradually, to evince the *righteousness of his judgments*, even in the consciences of those very persons whose end is to be burned; as also in the estimation of all others who shall wisely consider his ways. God endureth all things from the world, that he may be justified in his sayings, and may overcome when he is judged; Rom. iii, 4. That is, not only all he doth shall be righteous and holy, which is necessary from his own essential righteousness, whence he will not, whence he cannot do evil; but his works shall be so wrought and accomplished, as that the righteousness of them shall be eminently *pleadable* by his people against all reflections of ungodly men; especially shall his conduct towards barren, unprofitable churches, which he hath formerly owned and blessed, be *visibly* righteous. In his dealing with them, he will as it were refer the righteousness of his proceedings to all, even to themselves. When their consciences shall be awakened, they will come to a dreadful remembrance of all the

warnings God gave them, and how slowly he proceeded in his judgments; when their mouths shall be stopped and their faces filled with confusion. Again, God's dealings with barren apostates, being principally in spiritual judgments, the issue whereof is the total removal of the gospel from them, he will not do it at once, because others, to whom he will have the means of grace continued, may be yet mixed among them though unknown to us. See Romans xi, 2—5.

§27. Farther to clear up this whole matter, it may be inquired, what are those *degrees in spiritual judgments* whereby God doth ordinarily proceed against barren professors, which are here intimated in general? And,

1. In such cases God doth usually *restrain the influences of mens' light* upon their own consciences and affections. Their light and knowledge may *notionally* remain with them, but they are not at all affected with what they know, or guided by it in their practice. There is a time when light and knowledge, not improved, lose all their efficacy. God suffers such an interposition to be made between it and their consciences, by the actings of pride and various lusts, that it is of no valuable use to them. Whereas formerly, what they knew of the gospel excited an endeavor after some conformity to it; now it only floats in their fancies, and glances on their memories without effect. Of this we have but too many specimens every day.

2. God *deprives* them of all the *gifts* which they formerly received. "Gifts" are—an ability for the due exercise of gospel knowledge in duties of a public concern. Of these, persons may be made partakers, who yet prove first barren, and then apostates. But God will not suffer gifts to be long retained under a *course of backsliding*. As men neglect their exercise, so

God makes that very negligence a means of executing this judgment upon them. The talent that was but laid up in a napkin is *taken away*.

3. God having evidenced his rejection of them, he gives them up to the *temptation of the world*, and the society of ungodly men, whereunto they are engaged by their pleasures or profit. Their lusts being let loose, especially their love of the world, from under the power of their light and convictions, they cast themselves into the society of profane and wicked men. Among them they "wax worse and worse" every day, and learn in an especial manner to hate, despise, and blaspheme the good ways of God, which before they had known and professed.

4. God casts them out of the *hearts and prayers* of his people. This of all other things they least value; yea, they despise it: but it is one of the greatest effects of God's severity towards them. So he commanded his prophets not to pray for the people when his heart would not be towards them, Jer. vii, 16, chap. xi, 14, chap. xiv, 11. And in like cases, though not by express command, yet by his secret providence, he takes off the hearts of his people from them whom he hath designed to ruin for their sins. And we may observe, that our apostle himself, who a long time labored with unspeakable zeal and most fervent supplications to God for the incredulous Hebrews, Rom. ix, 2, 3, chap. x, 11. At length speaks of them as those whom he no more regarded, but looked on as express enemies of Christ, Thes. ii, 15, 16. And this sets them forward in their way towards the fatal curse.

5. The *curse* itself ensues; God takes off their natural restraints from sin; the rebukes of natural conscience, fear, shame and the like afflictive affections, shall have no more power on them; he *judicially hardens* them,

which contains the life and power of the curse here intended; for hereby are men secured to their final destruction and burning. Oftentimes God signifies this curse by wholly casting out such persons from any interest in the dispensation of the word. But suppose they should be able to carry it out stoutly in this world, so that themselves should neither much feel, nor others much observe, the curse of God upon them, yet the day is hastening wherein actual everlasting burning will be their portion.

VERSES 9—12.

But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

§1. The apostle's design. §2, 3. (I.) The text explained. §4. The work of faith. §5—9. Labor of love. §10. The shewing of faith and love. §11. by ministering to the saints. §12—15. The apostle's exhortation. §16—33. (II.) Observations.

§1. **E**XPOSITORS generally agree in pointing out from these verses, an instance of the apostle's great wisdom and prudence in his dealing with these Hebrews. His design in general is two-fold.

First, to *mollify* the severity of the preceding condemnation and prediction, that it might not have an effect on their minds beyond his intention. If men are disheartened in the way wherein they are engaged, by those on whose guidance they depend, and to whose judgment they are to submit, it makes them to despond, and to give over all thoughts of a cheerful progress.

Secondly, he maketh use of this discourse for a *transition* to the second part of his design; and this was to propose to them who were true believers, such encouragements and grounds of consolation, as might confirm them in their faith and obedience, which are the subjects of the remaining part of this chapter. Wherefore, as to make way for the severe *threatenings* which he hath used, it was necessary for him to describe the persons to whom they did in an especial manner belong; so it was no less requisite that he should describe those also to whom the ensuing *promises* and consolations pertain, as in these verses.

§2. (I.) "Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation." (*Αγαπητοί,*) "*Beloved;*" it is an expression of most entire affection. Perhaps these Hebrews were ready enough to entertain *jealousies* concerning him, that he had not that affection for them which he had for others; for he had now spent a long time among the Gentiles. To root this evil surmise out of their minds, he frequently employs affectionate compellations. And notwithstanding all the provocations and injuries he had received from them, he gave them, on all occasions, the highest demonstration of his most intense affection; never opposing or severely reflecting on them, but when they opposed the gospel and its genuine liberty. Again, He hath respect to his preceding severe expressions, as appears from the close of this verse—"though we thus speak;" as if he had said, "Notwithstanding this severe admonition, which, all circumstances considered, I have been forced to use; yet my heart stands no otherwise affected towards you, but as towards my countrymen, my brethren, and the saints of God." (*Πεπεισμεθα*) *We are persuaded;* CHRYSOSTOM insists much on the force of this word. The

apostle, as he observes, doth not say we *think*, or we *hope*, but he was "*fully persuaded*." There is a certain persuasion of mind that is founded on moral arguments, such as may bring a man to a full satisfaction in his mind, but yet so, that it is possible he may be deceived. Of this nature is that persuasion we have of the good condition of other men. So our apostle speaks of Timothy and his faith, 2 Tim. i, 5, "The faith that dwelt in thy mother Eunice, (πεισισμαι δε) and *I am persuaded* in thee also." His persuasion here concerning the Hebrews was of this kind; he had satisfactory reasons for it, which prevailed against all contrary objections. In like manner he speaks of the Romans, chap. v, 14, "And I myself am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness." The *grounds* of this persuasion, with respect to the Hebrews, he expresseth in the next verse, where we shall consider them.

He was persuaded concerning them (τα κρεισιν) *better things*; "such things as accompany salvation;" such as, whosoever is made partaker of them shall never perish eternally. It is usual to express excellent things in words of the *comparative* degree, although no comparison be included; especially when they are made mention of with respect to others who have no interest in them. However, here is certainly an *opposition* to what was before affirmed concerning others, who were barren and destitute of all saving grace, and fruits, and who should in the end be destroyed. "I am persuaded it will *go better with you*, than with such apostates." He was persuaded that these Hebrews were not *barren*, but such as brought forth the saving fruits of the Spirit of grace.

For if these things, it is added, (και εχομενα σωτηριας) *and such as accompany salvation*; literally, *such as*
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have salvation; that is, such as have saving grace in them, and eternal salvation infallibly annexed to them. Things that are not bestowed on any, such as are not wrought in any, but those that shall be saved; that is, in brief, true *faith* and sincere *obedience*. For in whosoever these are found, they shall be saved by virtue of the faithfulness of God in the covenant of grace.

§3. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your works," &c. The "works" mentioned having been truly gracious works, proceeding from faith and love, they evidence their persons to be in that state of grace wherein they should be effectually preserved to the end, by virtue of God's faithfulness in covenant. They had not the least reason to doubt of their future reward; for who was it that called them to these duties, and on what account? Is it not God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace? And hath he not therein promised to accept their persons and their duties by Jesus Christ? If now he should not do so, would he not be unrighteous? must he not deny himself, and not remember his promise? Wherefore the righteousness of God here intended is his *faithfulness* in the promises of the covenant. And he is not said to be righteous in rewarding, or not rewarding, but in *not forgetting*. "He is not unrighteous to forget." Now to "*forget*" any thing doth not reflect immediately on distributive justice, but upon fidelity in making good some engagement. The apostle in this verse gives an account of the grounds of his persuasion concerning these professors, expressed in the verse foregoing. The persuasion itself was of a mixed nature, and had something in it of a divine faith, and somewhat only of a moral certainty. As he drew his conclusion from, or built his persuasion on, God's faithfulness or righteousness, there was in it an infallible assur-

ance of faith that could not deceive him. For what we believe concerning God, as he hath revealed himself, is *infallible*. But as his persuasion had respect to the faith, love, and obedience, which he had observed in them, so it was only a moral assurance, and such as in its own nature *might* fail.

§4. That which, in the *first* place, he confirms his persuasion with, is (το εργον) *their work*. "God is not unrighteous to forget your *work*." It is not any singular work, but a *course* in working, which he intends. And what that "work" is, is declared in that *parallel* place of the same apostle, 1 Thes. i, 3. (μνημονευοντες υμων τε εργα της πιστεως, και τε κοτα της αγαπης) "*remembering your work of faith and labor of love*." The same expressions with those in our text, which is one of those numerous *coincidences* of expressions in this and the other epistles of the same writer, all peculiar to himself. The "work" here intended is the work of faith, the whole work of *obedience* to God, whereof faith is the principle; and hence it is called the "*obedience of faith*," Rom. i, 5. And this is called (το εργον) "*their work*;" because it was their *chief employment*, their *calling* lay in it. They did not attend to it occasionally, or when they had nothing else to do, as is the manner of some: religion was their *business*, and gospel obedience their *daily work*. This was their *whole*, even "to fear God, and to keep his commandments," Eccl. xii, 13. Besides, there is *work* and *labor* in it, or *great pains* to be taken about it. For hereunto our apostle, in the next verse, requires their *diligence*, ver. 11, as Peter doth *all diligence*, 2 Epistle i, 11.

§5. The *second* thing whereon the apostle grounds his confidence concerning them is their "*labor of love*," (και τε κοτα της αγαπης.) For the words express a *dis-*

tinct grace and its exercise, and are not exegetical of the preceding expressions.

This grace being excellent in itself, and its exercise in *labor* being highly necessary and yet greatly neglected, and both in conjunction being a principal evidence of an interest in those better things which accompany salvation, I shall dwell a little on the special consideration of them. *Love* is the second great duty of the life of God, which is brought to light by the gospel. It is *faith* gives glory to God on high, and *love* brings peace on the earth, wherein the angels comprised the substance of our deliverance by Jesus Christ, Luke ii, 14.

All things at first were made in a *state of love*. The rectitude, order, peace, and harmony, that subsisted in the whole creation, may be termed an impress from, and an expression of, the *love of God*; and our love towards him was the bond of that perfection, and the stability of that state. The whole beauty of the creation below consisted in man's loving God above all; and all other things in him, and for him, according as they participated of and expressed his glory and properties. This represented that love which was in God towards all his creatures, which he testified by declaring them to be all "very good."

When man by sin had broken *the first link of this chain of love*, when thereby we lost the love of God to us, and renounced our own love to him, all things fell into disorder and confusion in the whole creation; all things were filled with *mutual enmity* and hatred. The sin of man had brought all things into a condition of *vanity and bondage*, which they groan to be delivered from, Rom. viii, 20, 21, 22. After the entrance of this disorder and confusion, there was nothing of true *original love* in the world, nor was it by

any means attainable. For it all arose from the *love of God*, and was animated by *our love to him*. But now all things were filled with tokens and evidences of the *anger, displeasure, and curse of God for sin*; and men were wholly alienated from the life of God. No new spring or life can be given to love, but by a new discovery, that *God was love*, and had a love for us. For so the apostle tells us, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv, 10. "But if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another," ver. 11. No love could there be until a *fresh revelation was made that God is love*; for the first discovery of his love in the *creation* was utterly lost, and this after discovery was done by Jesus Christ.

§6. *Mutual love among believers* is a fruit of the Spirit of holiness, and effect of faith, whereby being knit together in the bond of entire spiritual affection, on account of their joint interest in Christ, and participation of the same new, divine, spiritual nature from God, they do value, delight, and rejoice in one another, and are mutually helpful in a constant discharge of those duties whereby their eternal, spiritual, and temporal good may be promoted. It is a *fruit of the Spirit of holiness*. *Natural* affections are inlaid in the constitution of our beings; *carnal* affections are grown inseparably from our nature as corrupted: but this love hath no *root* in ourselves until it be planted in us by the Holy Ghost. It is an *effect of faith*. "Faith worketh by love," Gal. v, 6. And the more sincere, active, and firm, our faith in Christ is, the more abundant will our love be towards all his saints. Faith in Christ doth first excite love to him, from whom, as it were, it descends to all that it finds of him in any others; and our *love of the saints* is but

the love of Christ represented and exhibited to us in them. Believers are *knit together in the bond of an entire affection*. This is that cement whereby the whole mystical body of Christ is fitly joined together and compacted, Eph. iv, 16. Break this bond of perfection, and all spiritual church order ceaseth; for what remains is carnal and worldly. Again: this mutual love among believers *springs from and is animated by their mutual interest in Christ*. In natural love, he that doth most love and prize *himself*, commonly doth least love and prize *others*. And the reason is, because he loves not himself for any thing which is *common* to him with others, but his self love is the ordering and centering of all things to his own satisfaction; but with this spiritual love he that *loves himself most*, that is, doth most prize and value the image of God in himself, doth most love others in whom it is. And we may know whether we cherish and improve grace in our own hearts by that love which we have to them in which it manifests itself, John v, 1. It acts itself by *valuation, esteem, and delight*. Such a love as will always *dispose*, and, when we are called, *enable* us to this duty, is required of us, if we are disciples of Christ. So are we to prize and value them, or at least to be ready to share with them, in all their conditions. For this love *acts itself by all means*, in all ways and duties whereby the eternal, spiritual, and temporal good may be promoted. I have aimed only at such a *description* of this love as may distinguish it from that *cold, formal* pretence of it in some outward duties, which the most satisfy themselves with.

§7. If this love in general be so a grace of the gospel; if it so spring from the love of God in Christ, as that there neither ever was, nor can be, the least of it

in the world which is not an emanation from that love; and if in its especial nature it so particularly relates to the spirit of Christ and our union with him, it must needs be among the *principal evidences* of a good spiritual condition. And the same will yet farther appear, if we consider the grounds whereon it is enforced in the gospel, which are principally these that follow:

1. As the head of all other considerations, it was to be the great *evidence to the world* of the truth and power of the gospel, and of Christ's mission, John xvii, 81. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." He intends their *unity among themselves*, the life, and spirit, and bond whereof is this love; for there is *no other* kind of unity which may be among Christians that carrieth the least conviction with it of the *divine mission*, truth, and power of Christ; seeing they may be *all carnal*, from carnal principles, and for carnal ends, wherein the world can see nothing extraordinary, as having many such units of its own. To see believers *live in love*, according to its nature, and acting the *duties* of it before mentioned, was in ancient times a great means of convincing the world concerning the truth and power of the gospel, and will be so again when God shall afresh pour down abundantly that spirit of light and love which we pray for.

2. Our privilege, and the evidence of our being the *disciples of Christ*, depend on our mutual love, John xiii, 34, 35. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you; that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This special commandment of Christ concerning

mutual love among his disciples is here and elsewhere called a "new commandment." The principal imperfection of the *love* in this matter was, that it gave *no example* of that love which is necessary to restore us into that condition of the love of God and one another which we fell from. This was reserved for *Christ*, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. Until he set us an example of his *inexpressible love* to us, which is so frequently proposed to our imitation, we could not know what kind of love it was wherewith we ought to love one another. So here, "that you love one another *as I have loved you*." Hence the command of *love* becomes a "new commandment;" not only because it was newly received from Pharisaical corruptions, but because the example of the love of Christ himself gave it new *life*; as if he had said, the great *example* I have set before you being that of love, the *new commandment* which I have given being that of love, the *design* I have to accomplish in and by you being the renovation of love, how can men otherwise know you to be *my disciples* but by your mutual love?" Without this, therefore, we can no way evidence ourselves to be the disciples of Christ. And this one consideration is of more weight with me than a thousand wrangling disputes that would furiously drive men into such outward forms and compliances which they call love.

3. This mutual love is that wherein the *communion of saints* doth principally consist. The *foundation* of it is laid in a *joint participation* of the same quickening spirit; and it is *expressed* in our joint participation of the same ordinances of worship. Hence it is apparent, that where this love is not, there is no communion of saints, Ephes. iv, 15, 16. "But speaking the truth in *love* may grow up into him in all things, which is

the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in *love*." There is not a more eminent description of the *communion of saints*, especially as united in church order, in the whole scripture. And we see that it begins and ends in *LOVE*; and so is it carried on from first to last. The communion of saints in any thing else, without this, is a deceitful figment.

4. Without this love we are of *no use* in the church of God. Some men seem to be very useful by their gifts, and I wish that none prided themselves in them; for if *alone*, they are apt to puff us up; but the very truth is, that without this *love*, and the constant exercise of it, they are of little or no use to the spiritual edification of the church. This our apostle doth not only plainly affirm, but also largely argue, Cor. xiii. For he doth not only compare the most excellent gifts of the Spirit with it, preferring it above them all; but also declares that without it no man, by virtue of those gifts, is of any better use in the church than a little "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," ver. 1—3: Wherefore we may consider,

5. That whatever grace any man may seem to have; whatever profession he may make, of whatever use he may appear to be; if he have not this *love*, if he live not in the exercise of it, he hath indeed no grace in truth, nor any real interest in the benefits of the gospel. Faith, where it is sincere, worketh by love, Gal. iv; and that which doth not so is *vain*, dead, and useless, Jam. ii, 14—16. If we *love one another*, we are born of God, and know God; if we do not, we know not God, whatever we pretend; for God is *love*, 1 John iv, 7,

8. For my part, I should be sorry that *any man living* should outgo me in earnest desires that all the people of God were agreed and *united*, as in faith and love, so also in the same way of worship, in all things; however, I know my desires to that end are *sincere*. But that there can be *no love*, or no due *exercise* of it, until that be accomplished, I do not believe; yea, I judge that if ever it be accomplished, it will rather be the *effect and fruit of love* than the cause of it. Let us, therefore, all lay hold on the present season, and not lose the *exercise of love* whilst we contend about it.

§8. Let us therefore not wait for other seasons, nor think any outward thing previously necessary to the due discharge of this great duty of the gospel. We are in our way, let us go about our work. And I shall only at present give a few *cautions* against the common hindrances of it:

1. Take heed of a *froward natural temper*. Wherever this predominates, it either weakens love, or sullies the glory of its exercise. Some good persons have naturally so much of the *Nabal* in them, that a man scarce knows how to converse with them. They mingle all the sweet fruits of love with so much harshness and sourness, as makes them ungrateful to those who most need them. But let such reflect, that if grace maketh not the froward, *meek*; the angry, *patient*; the peevish and morose, *sweet* and *compliant*; how doth it make the "leopard lie down with the kid, and the wolf dwell with the lamb?" Isa. xi, 6.

2. Watch against the *disadvantages of an outward condition*. Those of *high degree* are usually encompassed with so many circumstances of distance, that they know not how to break through them to that *familiarity of love* which ought to be among believers. But as the gospel, on all civil or secular accounts,

leaves to men all their advantages of birth, education, offices, power, manner of converse, &c. free and entire; so with respect to things *purely spiritual*, it lays all *level* among believers. "In Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but all are one in Christ;" and it is the new creature alone that makes the difference. Hence in all *church affairs* we are forbid to have any respect to the outward state and condition of men, Jam. ii, 1—5. We all serve the same common Lord and Master, who, when he was rich, for our sakes became poor. Let therefore the *greatest* know that there is no duty of spiritual love that *unbecomes* them. And if their state keep them from that communion of love which is required of all believers, it is their snare and temptation. If they *converse* not familiarly with the lowest of them, as they have occasion; if they *visit* them not when it is requisite; if they bear them not in their hearts and minds as their special church relation requires, they sin against the law of this holy love.

3. Watch against *provocations*. Where men are apt to turn every infirmity, every failing, every neglect, and it may be every mistake, into a provocation, and to take offence thereat, never expect any thing of love from such persons; for as their frame is a fruit of pride and self-conceit, so it is diametrically opposite to all the principal actings of love described by our apostle, 1 Cor. xiii, 4—7.

4. Take heed of *resting satisfied in the outward duties of love*, without the inward workings of it; as also in an apprehension of *inward affections* without outward fruits. Men may have a conviction that all the outward duties of love, in warning, admonishing, comforting, relieving with outward supplies, are to be attended to, and may accordingly be exercised in them,

and yet exercise little real love in them all. Hence our apostle supposeth that a man may give all *his goods to feed the poor*, and yet have no *charity*, 1 Cor. xiii, 2. All fruit partakes of the nature of the root.

§9. With this *love*, as an eminent adjunct, the apostle expresseth the *labor* of it; "the labor of love," (*κοπος της αγαπης*, *laboriosa charitas*) *laborious love*, saith Beza; and Erasmus (*laboris ex charitate suscepti*) "the labor undergone on the account of love," that is, in the *exercise* of it. The word (*κοπος*) denotes such a kind of *labor* as is attended with much *difficulty* and trouble, a *painful labor*. A *lazy love*, like that described by the apostle, Jam. ii, 15, 16, and with which most men satisfy themselves, is no evidence of a *saving faith*. But we are here taught, that love, if it be true, is *laborious and diligent*; or great and *difficult labor* is required for its due exercise. It is not to itself absolutely, but to its *exercise*, that labor is required; yet this exercise is such as is inseparable from the grace itself on account of the *difficulties* and *oppositions* that lie in its way. I shall name a few of those oppositions which are most powerful and least taken notice of:

1. *Self-love*; this is diametrically opposed to it. Self-love is the making a man's *self* his own centre. And this is the measure of self-love; whatever is added to it, it doth not satisfy; it would still have more: and whatever goeth from it, on one account or other, it is too much, it doth not please. Unless this be in some good measure mortified, and cast out, there can be no exercise of genuine divine love; and hereunto "labor" is required. For man being turned off from God is wholly turned into himself; and without an *holy violence* to all our affections, as naturally depraved, we can never be freed from an inclination to centre all in

self. Self love and the love of the saints are like two buckets; in proportion as the one rises, the other falls.

2. *Evil surmises* rise up with no small efficacy against the exercise of love. And they are apt, on various accounts, to insinuate themselves into the minds of men when they are called to the discharge of this important duty. One thing or other, from this depraved affection, shall be suggested to intimidate our hearts, and to weaken our hands in what we are about. And it requires no small spiritual "labor" to cast out all such surmises, and to give up ourselves to the conduct of that "charity which suffereth long and is kind, which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," 1 Cor. xiii.

3. *Distrust of God's promises*, as to supplies for ourselves. Men are afraid, that if they should enlarge themselves by way of bounty towards others, which is one duty of love, they themselves may in time be brought even to want. It would be endless to recount the *sacred promises* which give assurance of the contrary. But these are looked upon only as *good words* by the most, but are not really believed. Yea, men are apt to deceive their souls in supposing they believe the free promises of God concerning *grace* and *mercy*, whilst they believe not those which are annexed to *duty*. But he who *disbelieveth any* promises of the gospel, *believeth none*. Faith doth as equally respect all God's promises, as obedience doth all his commands. And it was a good design in a *reverend person** who wrote a discourse to prove, from scripture

*The author refers, I apprehend, to the Rev. Mr. Thomas Gouge, and his excellent little piece, entitled, "*The surest and safest way of thriving*," in which he has inserted some very remarkable and well authenticated instances from history, in proof of an extraordinary blessing having attended the liberal hand of *charity*. And indeed, blessed be God, it would be no difficult thing greatly to *enlarge* his list of instances. I may add, that the writer had, to an uncommon degree, an *experimental* knowledge of the subject. (Vide *Nonconformist's Memorial*, vol. I. p. 144—148.)

and experience, that largeness in charity is the best and safest way of thriving in this world.

4. Where the objects of this exercise of love are multiplied, *weariness is apt to befall us*, and insensibly to take us off from the whole. The wisdom and providence of God multiply objects of love and charity, to excite us to *more acts of duty*; and the corruption of our hearts, with self-love, useth the consideration of them, to make us *weary of all*. Men would be glad to see an *end* of their trouble, and of the charges of their love, when that only is true which has *no end*. Hence our apostle in the next verse expresseth his desire that these Hebrews should *not faint* in their work, but “shew the *same diligence* to the full assurance of hope *to the end*.” See Gal. vi, 9. And if we faint in spiritual duties because of the increase of their occasions, it is a sign, that what we have done already, did not spring from the proper root of faith and love. What is done in the strength and nature of conviction, however vigorous it may be for a season, will, in process of time, decay and fail; and this is the reason why many are exhausted in the course of their profession. Only the Spirit of God is living water that never fails. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright, Prov. x, 29. Where we are upright in the way of God, the very way itself will supply us with new strength continually; and we shall go *from strength to strength*; Psal. lxxxiv, 7. From one strengthening duty to another, and not be weary. But to this end, no small degree of *diligence and labor* is also required.

From these and the like considerations it is, that the apostle here mentioneth the industrious “labor of love” that was in the Hebrews, as an evidence of their *saving faith* and sincerity. The next thing expressed in these words is, the *evidence* they gave of this labor of love, and the means whereby the apostle came to know

it; (ενεδείξατο) *ye have shewed*, or manifested; the same word that James useth in the like case, (δείξον μοι, chap. ii, 18.) “*Shew me thy faith by thy works;*” declare it, make it manifest. To *shew* the labor of love, is to labor in the duties of it, as that it shall be *evident*. Yet this *self-evidencing power* of the works of love is a peculiar property of those that are some way eminent. When we *abound* in them, and when the duties of them are above the ordinary rate, then are we said to *shew* them, that is, they become conspicuous and eminent. To that purpose is the command of our Savior, Matt. v, 16, “*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*” Not only let it *shine*, but let it *so shine*, which respects the measure and degree of our obedience; and herein are we required so to abound that our works may be evident to all. Nothing is to be done by us *that it may* be seen; but what *may be seen* is to be done, that God may be glorified. Wherefore these Hebrews shewed the work of *faith*, and the labor of *love*, by a diligent attendance to, and an abundant performance of the one and the other.

The *end* or reason of their performance, which gives them spirit and life, rendering them truly Christian and acceptable to God, is added, (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ) *towards his name*. And we may observe, that the phrase is peculiarly annexed to the “labor of love;” the *labor of love towards his name*. And the *saints* were the immediate object of that love; as follows, “*In that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*” Wherefore, it is a love to the *saints*, on account of the name of God, that is intended. And this love to the “*saints*,” is “*towards the name of God*,” because their relation to God is the *reason* why they labored in love towards them. The whole, therefore, of this duty rightly performed, begins and ends with the *name of God*.

It is not improbable but that there might be some in the church, who, escaping the common calamities of the most, were *able to contribute bountifully* to the necessity of others, and their discharge of duty is reckoned to the whole church. And those who are furnished with the like ability in any church, would do well to consider, that the honor and reputation of the whole church, in the sight of God and man, depends much on their diligence and bounty in this respect. Hence that direction to Timothy: ‘Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,” 1Tim. vi, 17, 18.

§11. The special manner of the exercise of this labor of love is called *ministration*; “in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister,” importing the common ministration of brotherly love, what every one doth or ought to do in his own person. And the acts of it are many and various, such as—visiting them—administering advice and counsel—consolation—temporal supplies—endeavors in the use of means, for their full relief: *With God*, in continual prayers and supplications; *with men*, according to our interests and advantages, not being ashamed or afraid to own them in their poverty, distresses, and sufferings. The *rule* of this ministration is, every man’s opportunity, ability, and special call by circumstances that offer themselves. To conclude, here we have a true character of a church of sound believers:—They are such a society as, being called into the fellowship and order of the gospel, walk in faith, expressing it in fruits of obedience, carefully and diligently exercising love towards one another, on the account of the name of God, es-

pecially with a continual regard to them who suffer or are in any distress. These are the things indeed that *accompany salvation*.

§12. "And we desire of you." It is no small part of the duty and wisdom of gospel ministers to instruct their hearers in the proper use and due *improvement* of the promises and threatenings of God.

(Ἐπιθυμμεν δέ) "Moreover we desire." Chrysostom is large in the consideration of this word, and the wisdom of the apostle in the use of it. It certainly intends an *earnest desire*, and such ought to be the *desire of ministers* towards the profiting of their people. Where this is wanting, there will be but a cold, lifeless administration of the word. How were it to be wished, that all who are called to the care and charge of souls, would continually propose to themselves the example of this apostle! Do we think that the solicitude, watchfulness, tender love and affections, earnest and fervent desires for their good, expressed in the prayers, tears, travels, and dangers which he every where testifieth towards all the churches under his care, were duties prescribed to *him alone*, or graces necessary for him only? Do we think that they are not required of *us*, according to our measure, and the extent of our employment? The Lord help men, and open their eyes before it be too late! for either the gospel is not true, or there are few who in a due manner discharge that ministry which they take upon them.

I say, without this *earnest and fervent desire* after profiting and salvation of our people, we shall have a cold and ineffectual ministry among them. Neither is it our sedulity or earnestness in *preaching* that will relieve us, if that be absent. But whence does this *desire* proceed? From *zeal* for the glory of God in Christ;—real *compassion* for the souls of men;—and a

conscientious regard to our duty and office, with respect to its nature, trust, end, and reward. These are the principles that both kindle, and supply with fuel, those fervent desires for the good of our people, that oil the wheels of all other duties, and speed them in their course. According as these principles flourish or decay in our minds, so will be the acceptable exercise of our ministry in the sight of Christ, and the profitable discharge of it towards the church. And we have as much need to labor for this frame in our *hearts*, as for any thing in the *outward* discharge of duty. We must in the first place, "take heed to ourselves," if we intend to "take heed to the flock" as we ought, Acts xx, 28.

§13. We desire that "*every one of you*." He had so the care for the *whole flock*, as to be solicitous for the good of every individual person among them: he so labored, that, if it were possible, *not one* of those whom he watched over should miscarry. And it is of great advantage when we can so manage our ministry, that no one of those committed to us, may have any *just cause* to think themselves disregarded. And moreover, he shews hereby, that the matter insisted on concerned them all; for he doth not suppose that any one of them were in such a condition of security and perfection, as not to stand in need of the *utmost diligence* for their preservation and progress; nor any to have so fallen under decays, but that in the use of diligence they might be recovered. So should the love and care of ministers be extended to all the individuals of their flocks, with an especial regard to their respective conditions, that none, on the one hand, grow secure; nor, on the other hand, be discouraged. "Shew the same diligence;" (*εὐδεννυσθε*) *to shew*, is so to do any thing, as that the

doing of it may be quite evident: and the apostle respects not merely the *duty* itself, but the *evidence* of its *performance*, whereon his judgment and persuasion of them was grounded: as if he had said, "Continue in the performance of these duties, to give the same evidence of your state and condition as formerly." (*Ενεργῶν σπουδῶν*, *idem studium*) "*the same diligent endeavor.*" Chrysostom insists much on the apostle's wisdom in this expression also;—"the *same diligence*," for by it he insinuates his *approbation* of what they had done already, and manifests that he required nothing of them to secure their future condition, but what they had already some experience of. That indeed, which he approves and exhorts them to continuance in, is "the work of faith and labor of love in ministering to the saints." But here he expresseth the *manner* wherein they had attended to those duties, and in which they must continue, unless they intended to desert the duties themselves; namely, with *diligence and alacrity of mind*. For such were the oppositions and difficulties of mind, that they would assuredly meet with, as we have before declared, that unless they used all diligence and watchfulness, they would more or less faint in their duty.

§14. "To the full assurance of hope." The *hope* here intended, is a certain assured expectation of good things promised, through the accomplishment of those promises, accompanied with a love, desire, and valuation of them. *Faith* respects the promise, and *hope* the thing promised; wherefore it is a fruit of faith; it being the proper acting of the soul towards things believed, as good, absent, and certain. Hence, where our faith begets no hope, it is to be feared it is not genuine; and where our hope exceeds the evidence or assurance of faith, it is but presumption: these things

are inseparable and proportionable. It is impossible we should *believe* the promises aright, but that we should hope for the things promised; nor can we *hope* for the things promised, unless we believe the things promised; and this discards most of that pretended hope that is in the world. It doth not proceed from, it is not resolved into *faith in the promises*; and therefore is presumption. A valuation and esteem for things hoped for, are of the *essence* of hope; for whatever expectation we have of them, if we do not so value them, as to find a *satisfactory relief* in them in all our troubles, and which may for ever balance our present sufferings, hope is not genuine and truly evangelical.

There is (*Φασις*) the *full assurance* of this hope. Hope hath its degrees as well as faith. This "full assurance," is not of the nature or essence of it, but an especial degree of it in its improvement. A weak, imperfect hope will give but a weak and *imperfect* relief under trouble; but that which riseth up to full assurance, will *complete* our relief. Nevertheless, our minds in this world are not capable of such a degree of assurance in spiritual things, as to free us from the assaults to the contrary, and sometimes impressions of fear from those assaults. But there is such a degree attainable as is always victorious, which will give the soul peace at all times, and sometimes *fill it with joy*. This, therefore, is the assurance of hope here intended; such a fixed, constant, prevailing persuasion proceeding from faith in the promises, concerning the good things promised, our interest in them, and certain enjoyment of them, as will carry us comfortably through all the difficulties and troubles we have to conflict with.

It may be inquired, how the diligence before described tends to this assurance of hope? I answer, God hath appointed it as *the way*, 2 Pet. i. 10, "Give dili-

gence to make your calling and election sure, for if you do those things, you shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Besides, it hath a proper and *natural tendency* to this end. For by the use of this diligence, grace is increased in us, whereby our evidences of an interest in the promises of the gospel are cleared and strengthened; and herein doth our assurance of hope consist. By our diligent attendance to the duties of faith and love, every sin will be prevented whereby our hope would be impaired, (*Ἀχρι τέλους*) *unto the end*. There is no *season* wherein we may be discharged from this duty; no *condition* to be attained in this life, wherein this diligence will not be necessary for us; we must, therefore, attend to it until we are absolutely discharged from this warfare. And he that is discouraged because he cannot have a dispensation from this duty in this world, hath an heart that draweth back, and his soul is not upright in him.

§15. "That ye be not *slothful*;" or, that ye be not (*νῆμα, segnes, molles, ignavi*) *heavy and slothful*. He had before charged them that they were (chap.) v, 11. "Dull or slothful in *hearing*," comparatively; they were not so diligent or industrious therein as they ought to have been, or the reproof concerned *some* of them only. Here he warns them not to be slothful in *works* or practical duties. We are slothful in *hearing* when we do not learn the truths of the gospel with diligence and industry; when we do not admit them into our minds and understandings by the diligent use of means appointed to that end; and we are slothful in *practice*, when we do not stir up ourselves to the due exercise of those graces, and discharge of those duties, which the truth wherein we are instructed di-

rects to, and requires of us. This sloth is opposed to (τη σπουδῇ, ver. 11,) a *diligent endeavor* in the performance of our duty. Shew *diligence*, and be not *slothful*. If we faint or grow negligent in our duty, if careless or slothful, we shall never hold out to the end; or if we do continue in such a formal course as may consist with this *sloth*, we shall never come to the blessed end which we look for. The oppositions and difficulties which we shall assuredly meet with from within and without will not give way to faint and languid endeavors, nor will the Holy God prostitute eternal rewards to those who have no more regard to them than to give up themselves to sloth in their pursuit. Our course of obedience is called "running in a race," and fighting as in a battle, and those who are (νοῦργοι) *slothful* on such occasions, will never be crowned with victory.

§16. "But the (μιμηταὶ τῶν) *followers of them*," that is, the patriarchs of the Old Testament; for as he deals on all occasions with these Hebrews with instances and examples out of the Old Testament, so his immediate notice of Abraham as the principal of those he intended, confines his design to those under that dispensation, as chap. xi. Nor is there any difficulty in the variety of his expressions concerning *these* and those in the eleventh chapter: of the *latter* he says, that all died in faith, and obtained a good report, but *received not the promise*, ver. 13 and 39; and of the *former*, that through faith and patience they *inherited the promises*. But it is one thing to *receive* the promises, and another to *inherit* them. By *receiving* the promise the apostle respects the *actual accomplishment* of the great promise concerning the exhibition of Christ in the flesh. This they neither did nor could receive who died before his incarnation. By *inheriting* of the promises a

real participation of the *grace* and mercy proposed in them with eternal glory; this they all enjoyed, being saved by faith, even as we, Acts xv, 10, 11; Heb. iv, 2.

§17. Concerning these persons he proposeth to them the *way* that they took, and the *end* that they attained; (*δια πιστεως και μακροθυμιας*) “who by *faith* and *patience*,” or long suffering. Some think that here a *constant enduring faith* is only intended; but rather their faith, joined with the *constant exercise* of it against oppositions, is proposed to them under the single name of “faith:” for that by (*μακροθυμια*) “*patience*,” a distinct grace or duty is intended, is manifest from ver. 15, where Abraham’s carriage, upon his believing and receiving the blessing, is expressed by (*εἰς μακροθυμιας*) “*after he had patiently endured*.”

What was that faith, or of what kind, which is here ascribed to the patriarchs, is evident from the context. For it was that faith which had the *special promise* of God in Christ for its object; not a general, not a common faith, but that which respected the promise given from the foundation of the world, and expressly renewed to Abraham. Some amongst us wholly deny this kind of faith, and, beyond the *belief of the truth* or veracity of God *in general*, will not allow an especial faith with respect to the covenant and the promise of grace in Christ Jesus, whereas indeed there is no other faith true, useful, saving, and properly so called in the world. The *special object* of it was the future Messiah as a savior from sin; the *formal reason* of it was the *truth* of God in his promises, with his *unchangeableness* and infinite *power* to give them an accomplishment. And the *means* of ingenerating this faith in them was the *promise itself*. By this faith were they justified and saved, Gen. xv, 6. The benefits of the Redeemer’s mediation were made present and effectual to them by

the *promise*, as well as to us by his *actual* exhibition in the flesh; though to us in a much clearer light.

The next thing ascribed to them is (*μακροθυμία*) *patience*, or rather, *long suffering*, see 2 Tim. iii, 10, which is a gracious, tranquil frame of soul, on holy grounds of faith, not subject to take provocations, nor to be wearied with opposition. As *patience* is a gracious submissive quietness of mind in undergoing present troubles and miseries, so this *longanimity*, forbearance, tolerance, or *long suffering*, is a sedate, gracious disposition of mind, enabling us to encounter a series of difficulties and provocations without being exasperated by them so as to desert the course wherein we are engaged. So where it is ascribed to God, it signifies that goodness of his nature, and purpose of his will, that, notwithstanding manifold provocations, and, as it were, *daily new surprisals*, yet he will bear with sinners, and not divert from his course of goodness and mercy towards them.

In the course of our faith and profession we shall meet with *many difficulties* and oppositions, with many offences; but this is that grace whereby the soul of a believer is kept from *taking offence*, or admitting sinful provocations. Besides, there are sundry things in the *promises* of God, of which believers earnestly desire, if it were possible, a *present* accomplishment, or a greater *degree* of evidence in their accomplishment, or a greater *speed* towards it; such as the full subduing of their corruptions; success against, or freedom from, temptations; deliverance of the church from trouble, and the like. Now when these things are delayed, when the heart is ready to be "made sick by the deferring of its hopes," the soul is apt to despond, to give over its expectations; and if so, it will quickly also forsake its duties. The grace which keeps us up

in a quiet waiting upon God for the fulfilling of all that concerns us in his own time and season, that preserves us from fainting and sinful despondencies, is this long suffering or forbearance.

§18. (Κληρονομήτων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας) "who inherit the promises." It speaks in the *present* tense, but principally intends, as observed, those who lived before. And how come we to inherit the promises? Not by merit, nor by purchase, but by being the *true heirs* to it. And how do we become heirs to this inheritance? By God's gratuitous adoption, Rom. viii, 15, 17. All God's children are *heirs*; he hath *inheritance* for them all: this inheritance is *promised* to them, and therefore their enjoyment of it is called "inheriting the promises;" wherefore the grace of *adoption* is the foundation, cause, and way of our receiving promised grace and glory. And with respect hereunto it is that God is said to be "not unrighteous in our reward," ver. 10. For having freely adopted us, and thereby made us *heirs*, it belongs to his faithfulness and righteousness to preserve to us our inheritance. Only we are such heirs as have *means* assigned us for the attaining of our inheritance, which it is our incumbent duty to apply ourselves to.

"They inherited (ἐπαγγέλους) the promises." *Promise* and *promises* are used promiscuously, as is evident chap. xi, ver. 13 and 39, because they all sprang from one original promise, and all centered in him, in whom, and by whom, they were to be accomplished, being all "yea and amen in him." And because that one which concerned his person and mediation did virtually include all the rest, they are all frequently intended and included under the name "*promise*," in the singular number. But because God was pleased to let out, as it were, sundry rivulets of grace and bounty,

originally stored in the first great promise, by several particular grants and instances; partly for the representation of that fulness of grace which he intended to exhibit thereby; partly for the encouragement of our faith, and its direction in the application of the grace promised on various particular occasions; and because he was pleased frequently to renew the same great original promise as to Abraham and David; in that sense there are *many*, and therefore they are called "the promises;" and by reason of their *union* in the same covenant, whoever is really interested in any of them is so in all.

By the "promises" here the *things promised* are intended; to *inherit* the promises is to *partake* of the things promised. And the matter of these promises was, *all grace and glory*. That which is especially regarded is their full completion in everlasting glorious rest with God by Jesus Christ.

§19. (II.) *Obs.* 1. It is the duty of the dispensers of the gospel to satisfy their hearers concerning their love to them in Jesus Christ. And it is our duty to come to the best satisfaction we may in the spiritual condition of them with whom we are to have any spiritual communion: this is necessary both to ministers and private Christians. For the former, they are concerned in the advice of the wise man, Prov. xxvii, 23. "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flock." They are not only to provide good *pasture* for them, but they must know what they provide for them may be *suitable* and *seasonable*. And to this end there were at first some in the church who had the immediate inspection of the state and walking of its members, and were thereby enabled, as Moses said to his father-in-law, Numb. x, 31, to be "*instead of eyes*" to the teachers, to look into the condi-

tion of all sorts of persons. Unless a man have a good satisfaction concerning the spiritual condition of those that are committed to his charge, how can he approve himself among them a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, to give to all their proper portion? When men have not a *certain design* to deal with their hearers according to what they are persuaded that their spiritual state doth require, how shall they instruct, how shall they warn, how shall they comfort any? In brief, this *persuasion* principally regulates the whole work of the ministry. He that is a physician to the body must acquaint himself with the especial state and condition of his patients, and of their distemper, wherein his skill is eminently to be exercised; let him be furnished with the greatest store of good medicines, without that knowledge, and if he gives them out promiscuously to all comers, all he doth will be of little use. It may be, his medicines being safe, they will do no harm; and it is as probable they will do as little good. Nor will it be otherwise with physicians of souls in the like case.

Four things are required to make the dispensation of the word profitable: *A good spring*, a *safe rule*, a *distinct design*, and *enlivening affections*. The *first* is the dispenser's own light and experience. He is to see, in his work, with *his own eyes*, and not those of other men. It is out of the good *treasure of his own heart*, that he is to bring forth good things *new and old*. His *safe rule* is the infallible word of truth. This must be the touchstone of his light and experience; and it is suited to the whole work and duties of it, 2 Tim. iii, 16, 17. His *distinct design* lies in the due consideration of the spiritual state and condition of them to whom the word is to be dispensed. And herein consists the greatest part of the ministerial skill. This is

that which secretly distinguishes the *constant* ministerial dispensation of the word from the *occasional* exercise of gifts. The *enlivening affections* that ought to accompany the dispensation of the word are, *zeal* for the glory of God, and *compassion* for the souls of men. But these things must not here be insisted on.

§20. And for *private Christians* among themselves, their mutual duties are referred to *love* and the *fruits* of it. Now this love is founded on our *persuasion* concerning the spiritual state and condition of each other; I mean, that special mutual love which ought to subsist among the disciples of Christ as such. They are to love one another as members of the same mystical body and united to the same spiritual head. And to act this love aright, as to its object, as grounded on this persuasion, *take heed of evil surmises*; these are the bane of evangelical love, for "charity hopeth all things," namely, that are good, if we have no certain evidence to the contrary. And thus in general we may have this persuasion concerning all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. We have indeed no obligations to this purpose towards such as visibly and evidently walk unworthy of that high calling whereby we are called. For *condemning* such our apostle assures us, that, whatever they profess, "they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things," Phil. iii, 18, 19. Thus our apostle, in all his epistles to the churches, salutes them all as *saints*, and called in Christ Jesus. For although some of them might not be so *really*, yet his persuasion, and his love, being directed according to the rule, were acceptable to Christ. And as we cannot direct our love,

no more can we exercise any of the duties or fruits of it without his persuasion in a due manner.

§21. *Obs.* 2. We may, as occasions require, publicly testify that good persuasion which we have concerning the spiritual condition of others, even to themselves. Our apostle, not only here, but likewise in all his epistles, still declares his hopes and confidence that those to whom he wrote had a blessed interest in Christ; and does not hesitate to give them all the titles which really and spiritually belong only to the elect believers. Now this is not to be done lightly, in flattering compliance; but upon just and scriptural grounds, particularly in three cases it is warrantable and requisite:—when it is done for due encouragement, just vindication, and when we have any duty to discharge towards them, which requires we should remove any prejudice out of its way, as was the present case with the apostle.

§22. *Obs.* 3. The best persuasion we can arrive to, concerning the spiritual condition of any, leaves yet room, yea makes way for gospel threatenings, warnings, exhortations, and encouragements. Whatever men's condition be under the gospel, they are still obliged to the means appointed for their edification and preservation. Amongst all the vain imaginations about religious things, vented in these latter days, there is none savors more rankly of satanical pride and human folly, than that of such a state of *perfection* attainable in this life, wherein, as it is phrased, men should be “above ordinances;” that is, should be “vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds,” above the authority, and wisdom, and truth of God. Whilst we *are in the way*, under the conduct of the gospel, we need all the advantages it affords in our progress. Of this sort are all the threatenings, promises, exhortations, and encouragements

contained in it. See chap. iv, 1, 2. Let not hearers say, or think in their hearts, "This preacher looks upon us as persons unregenerate, or hypocrites, perhaps out of ill-will to us." It is certain that on such occasions, men are apt to give place to similar surmises. For an apprehension thereof is the reason why the apostle maketh, as it were, this *apology* for the severe foregoing commination. As if he had said, "Do not you entertain any hard thoughts, or evil surmises, concerning me or my dealings with you in this matter; there are other reasons for it; for as to your personal interest in the grace of Christ, I have as yet a good persuasion, although I thus speak." Sharp frosts are needful to make the ground fruitful, as well as the clearest sun-shine. Sharp reproofs, and earnestness in pressing gospel comminations are sometimes as needful for the best of us, as the administration of the richest and most precious promises, Hos. x, 11.

§23. *Obs.* 4. Among professors of the gospel some are partakers of *better things* than others. They were all *professors* concerning whom our apostle discourseth in this and the preceding verses; and yet, notwithstanding any *good things* that some might have had, some of them possessed *better things* than they. Some of them had *better gifts* than others, some as to the special *kinds* of gifts, but mostly as to the *degrees* of their usefulness to their proper end. And as the whole church should hence learn to acquiesce in the sovereignty of the Spirit of God, who divideth to every man severally as he will; so those who have received these *better* and differing gifts, either in nature or degrees, have some duties *singularly* incumbent on them, and whose discharge will be required at their hands. As particularly that they *walk humbly* with God, cherishing a constant care, that a sense of their gifts and

abilities do not puff them up, or fill them with conceits of themselves, as if they were somewhat, and so make them exalt themselves above their brethren. Yea, he who is eminently *gifted*, if he be not eminently *humble*, hath an unquiet life within doors. And if such a person be not truly gracious, he is in the ready way to fall into the condemnation of the devil. And it is further required of such persons that they be not only humble, but also in an especial manner *thankful*. The things whereof they are partakers are "gifts," and not to be thankful for gifts is the most proper, that is, the most base ingratitude.

Again: a proportionable fruitfulness is expected. He who had received *five talents* was not only obliged to trade with them, but to get five talents more. To whom much is given, of him not *somewhat*, but *much* is required. The hiding of many talents is a sin whereof there is no instance in the scripture; it is a sin that hath a greatness in it not to be supposed; and those who may be concerned therein ought to tremble with the apprehension of it.

Moreover: there are spiritual things which differ in their *whole kind* and nature from others, and are *better* than they, as to their essence and being. Such is all *saving grace*, with all the fruits of it. True gospel faith and sincere obedience are *better things* than the most glorious hypocrite was ever made partaker of. All that eat outwardly, in ordinances, of the bread of life, do not feed on the hidden manna. All that have their names enrolled in the churches, may not yet have them written in the Lamb's book.

§24. *Obs. 5.* There are, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, such things bestowed on some persons, as infallibly accompany salvation. In that covenant, there is such a concatenation of spiritual things,

that a real participation of some of them doth infallibly conclude an indefeasible interest in them all. For instance, *saving faith* is an effect of God's immutable purpose of election; if *that* therefore cannot be changed, *this* cannot utterly fail.

§25. *Obs. 6.* It is the duty of all professors strictly to examine themselves concerning their participation of those better things which accompany salvation. Their condition is deplorable who, under an outward profession, satisfy themselves with those common gifts, graces, and duties, which are separable from salvation. Yet that it is so with many in the world, who thereon cry peace, peace, while sudden destruction is coming upon them, is but too manifest. The best of the hearers of the gospel may have much to be blamed, although their sincerity in general be highly approved. Severe threatenings in the dispensation of the gospel, are usually proposed to them who yet are not absolutely liable to the penalty threatened. They do not predict what will come to pass, but warn us of what is to be avoided.

§26. *Obs. 7.* Faith, if it be a *living* faith, will be a *working* faith. It is "the work of *faith*" which the apostle here commends. This case is so stated by James, that it needs no farther confirmation, chap. ii, 20. "Wilt thou know, or, knowest thou not, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" He is a most *vain* man who *thinks* otherwise; who hopes for any benefit from that faith which doth not work by love. Satan hath no greater design in the world than to abuse gospel truths. When the doctrine of free justification by faith, through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, was first fully revealed and declared, his great design was then to persuade men, that there was no need of obedience; and so that they

might live in sin as they pleased. And although this be now condemned by all, yet it is no more than what, upon the matter, most practise; for they suppose that by being of this or that religion, Papists, or Protestants, or the like, they shall be saved whatever their ways and works are. So Papists, for instance, are indeed the greatest *Solifidians* in the world; for to own the faith of the church is enough with them to secure the salvation of any. This abomination having been early started, was seasonably suppressed by the writings of the apostles James and John.

§27. *Obs.* 8. We ought to look on obedience as our *work*; which will not admit either of sloth or negligence. Here lies the occasion of men's ruin, while they profess the gospel. The duties of profession are things of *course* to them, and what does not clash with their principal work and business in the world. This makes their profession serve to no other end, than to make them secure in a perishing condition. Now that our obedience may indeed be our "work," it is requisite, that the carrying of it on to the glory of God, be our *principal design* in the world. And then is any thing the object of our purpose and principal design, when we subordinate all other things and occasions to it, that they may not jostle nor stand in competition with it; when "to us to live is Christ," or he is the *chief end* of our life. When men usually and ordinarily suffer other things to divert them from duties of obedience in their season, obedience is not their principal design; but when any thing possesseth the chief place in our valuation, when it is the object of our chief design; the principal contrivances of our minds will be concerning it. To which we may add, that *actual diligence* and watchfulness are required in our obedience, if we make it our "work."

§28. *Obs.* 9. It is a due regard to the name of God that gives life spiritually, and acceptance to all the duties of love which we perform towards others. Great things have been done in the world, with a great appearance of love, which yet have been all lost, as to the glory of God, and the spiritual advantage of the performers. Some have been lost from a principle of superstition, some from a design of merit, some from vain glory, or a desire of reputation, by being seen of men, &c. Now whereas this labor of love is a duty which hath so many difficulties attending it, as we have before declared, it is of the highest concernment to us to take care that what we do therein be not lost. Unless it be done with respect to the command of God, and so be a part of the "obedience of faith;" and unless it be influenced with a regard to God's peculiar concernment in them towards whom our love is exercised, it will not endure the trial, when the fire shall consume all hay and stubble. What we do in this kind is so to be done, that the Lord Jesus Christ may own it as done to himself in the first place.

§29. *Obs.* 10. That it is the will and pleasure of God, that many of his saints be in a condition while in this world, wherein they stand in need of being ministered unto. And those whose special lot it is to be thus exercised, may do well to consider always,—that this will and pleasure of God is accompanied with infinite wisdom and holiness, so as that there is no unrighteousness therein. That they shall not be final losers by their poor afflicted condition. God will make up all to them both here and to eternity. And if there were no more in it but this, that they were brought thereby to a clearer foresight of, and more earnest longings after, eternal rest and glory, they have a sufficient recompense for all their suffer-

ings. Let them but consider, how much spiritual and eternal mercies, wherein they are interested, exceed things temporal, they will find they have no cause to complain. And whereas it is for the glory of God, and the benefit of the church, that some should be peculiarly in an afflicted condition, they ought even to rejoice that God hath chosen them to deal by as he pleaseth to those ends. Besides, God hereby gives testimony to all, that the good things of this world are no pledges of his love, and that he hath *better things* in store for them whom he careth for; and he maketh way hereby for the vigorous fruitful exercise of all the graces of his Spirit, in the various conditions whereinto the members of the church are cast. And let every one look to it and know, that according to his outward condition in the world, whether it be of want or abundance, there is a peculiar exercise of grace to the glory of God required of him.

§30. *Obs.* 11. The great trial of our love consists in our regard to the saints that are in distress. On this is the commendation of the love of these Hebrews founded; they “ministered to the saints.” Love, or at least an appearance of love, will be easily preserved, where we have little or no need of one another; but when the exercise of it proves costly, when it puts us to charge or trouble, or exposes to danger, then is it brought to its trial. And in such a season we have experience, that the love of many is so far from bringing forth more fruit, as that the very leaves of it fall off, and they give over its profession. Wherefore—it is the glory and honor of a church, the principal evidence of its spiritual life, when it abounds in those duties of faith and love which are attended with the greatest difficulties. From hence doth the apostle commend these Hebrews, and firmly persuades himself, that they were endued with those better things which

accompany salvation. For hereby as we might shew—God is singularly glorified—the gospel is peculiarly promoted—an especial lustre is put upon the graces of the Spirit, and—all the ends of Satan and the world in their persecutions, are utterly frustrated.

§81. *Obs.* 12. Our profession will not be preserved, nor the work of faith and love carried on to the glory of God and our own salvation, without a constant, *studious diligence* in the preservation of the one, and the exercise of the other. Our apostle, knew nothing of that *lasy* kind of profession which satisfies the generality of Christians at this day. They can shew all diligence in their trades, in their callings, in their studies; it may be, in their foolish pleasures, and sometimes in the pursuit of their carnal lusts. The duties of divine *worship* they will attend to, out of custom or conviction; some acts of *charity* they may, perhaps, be sometimes drawn to, or may themselves purpose for their reputation, that they may do like others of their quality in the world: but to project and design in their minds how they may glorify God in the duties of faith and love, as “the liberal man deviseth liberal things” to keep up an earnest bent and warmth of spirit in them, to lay hold on, and rejoice in all opportunities for them, which yet are required to this diligence—they utterly reject all such thoughts. But what do we imagine? Is there *another* way for us to go to heaven than what was prescribed to the primitive believers? Will God deal with us on more easy terms, or such as have a farther compliance with carnal ease, than those that were given to them of old? Let no man mistake; these two principles are as certain and sacred as any thing in the gospel:—Unless there be in us a “work of faith” in personal holiness, and a “labor of love” towards others, there is nothing in us

that "accompanies salvation." And—That this work of faith and labor of love will not be successfully carried on without studious *diligence* and earnest *endeavors*. That *nominal Christianity* which despiseth these things, will perish with the real author of it, which is the devil.

§32. *Obs.* 13. Ministerial exhortation to duty is needful even to them who are sincere in the practice of it, that they may abide and continue therein. But how few are those who look upon it as an ordinance of God whereby they are enabled for, and kept up perseveringly to their duty. Such exhortations not only *direct* to duty, but, through the appointment of God, they are *means* of communicating grace to us for the due performance of duties.

§33. *Obs.* 14. Whereas there are degrees in spiritual *saving* graces and their operations, we ought continually to press toward the most perfect of them. Not only are we to have hope, but we are to labor for the "assurance of hope." It is one of the best evidences that any grace is true and saving in its nature and kind, when we labor to grow in it, or that it may do so in us. This is the end of all the ordinances and institutions of the gospel; Ephes. iv, 13. Hereby alone do we bring glory to God, adorn the gospel, and grow up into a conformity with Christ.

§34. *Obs.* 15. Hope, being improved by the due exercise of faith and love, will grow up into such an assurance of rest, life, immortality, and glory, as shall outweigh all the troubles and persecutions that in this world may befall us. There is nothing in the world so vain as that common hope, whereby men living in their sins make a reserve of heaven when they can continue here no longer. The more it thrives in the minds of any, the more desperate is their condition;

is being only an endless spring of encouragements to indulged and presumptuous sin. Its beginnings are usually, indeed, but small and weak; but when it hath been so far cherished as to be able to defeat the power of convictions, it quickly grows up into presumption and security. But this hope, which is the daughter, sister, and companion of faith, the more it grows up and is strengthened, the more useful is it to the soul, as being a living spring of encouragements to stability in obedience; for, being once fully confirmed, it will on every occasion of trial or temptation give such a present existence in the mind to future certain glories; as shall deliver it from snares and fears, and confirm it in its duty.

§35. *Obs.* 16. Spiritual *sloth* is ruinous to any profession, though otherwise never so hopeful. The apostle was persuaded of good things, and such as accompany salvation, concerning these Hebrews; but yet he lets them know that if they intended to enjoy them, they must not be slothful. Spiritual sloth, as to its nature, is an habitual indisposition of mind to spiritual duties in their proper time and season, arising from unbelief and carnal affections, producing a neglect of duties, and dangers, remissness, carelessness, or formality, in attending to them, or in the performance of them. The beginning of it is negligence, and the end of it ruining security. When men will not only readily *embrace* occasions that offer to divert them from duty, but will be apt to *seek out* shifts; whereby they may, as they suppose, be excused from it, which corrupt nature is exceedingly prone to, they are under the power of this *vicious habit*. This is also the case, when in conflicts about duties, and particularly with respect to prayer, the scale is often turned on the side of the flesh and unbelief. Grace in be-

lievers will move from an absolute compliance. If the contrary reasons, insinuations, and objects prevail, the soul "consults with flesh and blood," and is under the power of spiritual sloth; and so are men, by frivolous pretences and arguings from self and the world, kept off from the most important duties. Although this sloth may have various causes and occasions, yet the principal of them are those which I have mentioned—*unbelief and carnal affections*.

(1.) *Unbelief* is the principal cause of it, as faith is of that diligence and watchfulness, which are opposite to it. As faith will remove mountains out of our way, or help us to conquer the greatest oppositions, so unbelief will make mountains of mole-hills, it will make every hindrance like an unconquerable difficulty. The soul made slothful by it cries, "There is a lion in the way, a lion in the streets," Prov. xxvi, 13.

(2.) *Carnal affections* do variously promote this evil frame of mind. Love of ease, wealth, profit, pleasure, will quickly make men spiritually slothful: where these are prevalent, every thing in the way of holiness and obedience is difficult and irksome. Strange *representations* will be made to the mind of all duties, if not in general, yet in all particular instances that offer themselves; wherefore, if we see a man slothful, negligent, careless in the duties of religion, we may be sure that one carnal affection or other is powerful in him.

The *effects* of this spiritual sloth are in general,—A *neglect of known duties*, in matter or manner; and where this evil is predominant, clear duties will be debated: what more clear duty, than that we should open our hearts to Christ when he knocketh, or diligently receive those intimations of his love and mind, which he tendereth in his ordinances? Yet this will a soul dispute, when under the power of sloth, Cant. v,

2, 3. Again—*regardlessness of temptations*, and dangers by them. When men begin to walk as if they had no enemies, as if in their course of life, there were no snares, spiritual sloth hath possessed their minds. To which we add, as another effect—*Weariness and heartless despondencies* in a time of troubles and difficulties.

§36. *Obs.* 17. Faith and patient long-suffering are the only way whereby professors of the gospel may attain rest with God in the accomplishment of the promises. This will appear when we consider;

(1.) Those *reproaches* to which the profession of a saving grace will expose men. When men said to David, "Where is now thy God?" or, what is become of thy religion and profession, thy pretended trust in God? he says it was a killing sword in his bones, it pierced deep and pained greatly, Psalm xlii, 10. And it is spoken in the person of our Savior, "Reproaches have broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness," Ps. lxxix, 20. They "shook the head at him, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him seeing he delighted in him," Ps. xxii, 8—11; Matt. xxvii, 43. What befell Christ *on* the cross, teacheth the church what it is to expect *under* it; and patient long suffering is our only relief.

(2.) *Violence and persecutions*. Some come with the fury of a storm, as if they would bear all down before them; others by their long duration, in vexing and consuming troubles, are intended gradually to "wear out the saints of the Most High," Dan. vii, 25. Here we have need of patient long-suffering if we intend to inherit the promises. This is that grace which calmeth and supporteth the soul under all such pressures.

(3.) Many *great promises concerning the kingdom of Christ* in the world. For instance, with respect to

the judgments which God in his own time will execute on the antichristian persecuting world, it is said, "He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword; *here is the patience and faith of the saints,*" Rev. xiii, 10. Until these things are accomplished, the saints must exercise patient long-suffering, waiting in prayer for what they have not yet received, with a ready application of mind to present duties. John xxi, 22.

(4.) The principal concerns of our personal obedience. New storms arise; corruptions grow strong, and grace is under decays; temptations abound, and *consolations* are afar off. It may be they are *frequently* exercised with changes and disappointment. This fills them with many perplexities, and often makes them ready to faint. Unless this "patient long-suffering" accompany us in our whole course, we shall not finish it with glory to God, or comfort to our own souls.

§37. *Obs.* 18. All believers, all the children of God, have a right to an inheritance; an inheritance, incomparably the best, both for *security* and *value*. Let an inheritance be never so excellent and valuable in itself, yet if it be not *secure*, if a man's title to it be not firm and unquestionable, its worth to him is proportionably diminished. But this inheritance is conveyed, settled, and secured by the promise, covenant, and oath of God, 2 Sam. xxiii, 5; Rom. iv, 16. These secure it from all possibility of our being defrauded. Besides, the *value* of it is inexpressible; it is a *kingdom*, Matt. xxv, 34; Jam. ii, 5. *Salvation*, Heb. i, 14. *The grace of life*, 1 Pet. iii, 7. *Eternal life*, Titus iii, 7. *God himself*, who hath promised to be our reward, Rom. viii, 17.

§38. *Obs.* 19. The providing of examples for us in the holy scriptures, which we ought to *imitate*, is an effectual way of teaching, and a great fruit of the care and kindness of God towards us. And if we “follow” them not, it is nothing but spiritual “sloth,” or the love of the world and sin, that retards us. If their examples move us not to the like duties of obedience with them, it is an evidence that we have not the same spirit of faith with them. The courage of a *valiant* man is enflamed by a noble example, but a *coward* shrinks back and trembles at it. There is great force in that direction, James v, 10, “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” Let a minister of the gospel, for instance, who is made partaker in his measure of the same Spirit, consider how Elijah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, and the rest of those holy souls who spake in the name of the Lord carried themselves under their afflictions and trials, and it will enflame his heart to engage cheerfully in the like conflicts. All those holy souls that are now at rest with God in glory, as having “inherited the promises,” were sometimes as we are, conflicting with corruptions and temptations, undergoing reproaches and persecutions, laboring in duties and a constant course of obedience to God: if, therefore, we “follow” them in their *work*, we shall not fail to partake with them in their *reward*.

VERSES 13—16.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself, saying surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee; and so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

§1. Introduction. §2. (I.) The words explained. God's promise to Abraham. §3. His blessing him. §4. The promise confirmed. §5. Abraham by patience obtained the promise. §6. The nature, end, and use of an oath. §7, 8 (II.) Observations. §9. Where the promise of God is absolutely engaged, it will break through all difficulties. §10, 11 Other observations. §12—14. That a solemn oath, in some cases, becomes the necessary duty of Christians.

§1. **I**N the close of the foregoing verse the apostle expresseth the *end of all his exhortations*, viz. that all who comply with them, in faith and obedience, may *inherit the promises*, or enjoy the *things promised* of God to them that believe and obey. Of all intercourse between God and sinners, the *promise* on *his* part, is the sole foundation whereby he expresseth his goodness, grace, truth, and sovereign power to men; and, on *our* part, the *inheriting* of those promises, is the *end* of all our obedience: wherefore the apostle, having arrived in the series of his discourse to the mention of this great period of his whole design, stays a while to consider and explain it in these verses. From what he had just said about enjoying the promises, he takes occasion to declare to them the nature of the gospel, and the mediation of Christ therein proposed to them. To this end he lets them know that “the promises” were nothing but the accomplishment of the great *promise* made to Abraham. In that promise both the great blessing of Christ himself, and the whole work of his mediation, were included. Wherefore on this account doth he insist so largely on *this promise* and the confirmation of it; for it was not given him merely on his own account, or for his own sake; but he was singled out as a *pattern* and example for all believers; and hence he became “the father of the faithful and heir of the world.”

§2. (I.) That which is affirmed concerning this person is, that *God made promise to him* (επαγγελιαμενος ο Θεος.) *Divine promises* are—express declarations of the grace, goodness, pleasure, and purpose of God to-

wards men, for their good and advantage. That here intended was, for the substance of it, what God made to Abraham, Gen. xii, 2, 3. "I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And it was further confirmed to him by way of a *covenant*, chap. xv, 3—5; and afterwards more solemnly, chap. xvii, 1—6. Thus God gave out the fulness of the promise *by degrees*. First, he mentions only *his own person*, without any declaration how the promise should be fulfilled in his seed, chap. xii, 2, 3. Then he expressly adds *his seed*, whereby the promise should be accomplished, chap. xv, 5; and at length he lets him know the *extent* of his seed, as including *believers of all nations*; chap. xvii, 5; to all which a farther confirmation by the *oath of God* is added, chap. xxii, 15—18. So are we to embrace and improve, as he did, the first dawnings of divine love and grace. If we value not, or improve not, in thankful obedience, the *first intimations* of grace, we shall make no progress towards greater enjoyments. "*Surely*," (ν μὲν, *certe*) *truly*, undoubtedly The manner of expression denotes a reserved condition, rendering what follows a most sacred oath; *unless I bless thee*, let me not be trusted in as God, or the like. But the formality of the oath of God is not expressed, either in Genesis or here; only respect is had to what he affirms, *by myself have I sworn*.

The promise itself is expressed in these words, "blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." This *reduplication* is a pure Hebraism, vehemently affirming the thing promised, and hath in it the nature of an oath. "*Blessing I will bless thee*;" I will

do so *without fail*, I will do so *greatly* without measure, and *eternally* without end.

§3. The *promise* itself, or the matter of it was God's *blessing*, which is always (תוספת טרבה) an *addition of good* to him that is blessed. So it is said Gen. xxiv, 1. "God hath *blessed* Abraham in all things," which is explained ver. 35. "The Lord hath greatly *blessed* my master, and he is become great, and he hath *given* him *flocks* and herds, silver and gold." God *increased* him in wealth, riches, and power, until he was esteemed as a mighty prince by the people among whom he dwelt; Gen. xxiii, 6; and this was a type and pledge of that full administration of grace and spiritual things which was principally intended. Abraham was the first person in the world, after our first parents, to whom the *promise* of the Messiah, as the offspring of the promise, was confirmed. It was afterwards once more confirmed to David, whence in his genealogy he is said in a peculiar manner to be the son of *David*, the son of *Abraham*. As he was thus to be the *natural father* of Christ according to the flesh, whence all nations were to be blessed in him, or his *seed*; so being the *first* that received or embraced this promise, he became the *spiritual father* of all that believe; and in them the heir of the world in a *spiritual* interest, as he was in his carnal seed the heir of Canaan in a *political* interest. Men come to be accepted of God on account of their faith in *that promise* which was made to Abraham, that is, in him whom the promise exhibited.

§4. The next thing considerable in the words is the *special confirmation* of the promise by the oath of God; "for God, when he could swear by no greater, swear by himself;" (επαγγειλαμενος ὁμοσε) *promising he sware*. He did not first promise, and *afterwards* confirm it with his oath; but gave his promise in the way

of an oath: yet are they distinctly considered; for in the next verse the apostle calls the promise and the oath two things, (*δύο πράγματα*) *two acts* of God. But although he hath respect principally to that *special promise*, which was explicitly given with an *oath*, yet it may be applied to, and is included in, all the promises of God. The nature of this oath of God consists in an express engagement of those holy properties whereby he is known to be God to the accomplishment of what he promiseth or threateneth. By his being, his life, his holiness, his power, is he known to be God; and therefore by them he is said to swear, when they are all engaged to the fulfilling of his word. "Because he could swear by none greater." This reason is built upon the maxim, that the nature of an oath consisteth in the invocation of a *superior*, in whose power we are; and a respect to *punishment* is that alone which gives force and efficacy to oaths among men. There is a principle ingrafted in the minds of men by nature, that God is the supreme ruler and judge of them and their actions; and also that the holiness of his nature, as well as his rectoral righteousness and impartial judgment, require sin be punished in them who are under his moral government. The same principle informs them also of his *omnipotent power* to punish all sorts of transgressors, the highest, greatest, and the most exempt from human cognizance. According as the minds of men are actually influenced by these principles, so are their *oaths* valid and useful, and no otherwise. But wherefore then is God said to *swear*, who "can have no greater to swear by," no *superior* to whom in swearing he should have respect? It is because, as to infinite omniscience, power, and righteousness which are respected in an oath, God is that *essentially* to himself which he is in a way of *external*

government, to his creatures; wherefore when he will condescend to give us the utmost security and assurance of any thing which our nature is capable of, antecedent to actual enjoyment, by the express engagement of his holiness, veracity, and immutability, he is said to “*swear*,” or confirm his word with his oath.

§5. “And so, after he had *patiently endured*, he obtained the promise.” Abraham was not discomposed or exasperated by his trials so as to *wax weary*, or to fall off from a dependance on God. The apostle explains fully the meaning of this word, (μακροθυμία) *patient endurance*, Rom. iv, 18—21. “Against hope he believed in hope,” &c. i. e. continuing in his way, a way of believing, he trusted to the veracity and power of God against all difficulties and opposition. He abode a *long season* in this condition, waiting on God and trusting to his power. It is not a thing quickly tried whether a man be (μακροθυμος) one that will *patiently endure* or no. It is not from his deportment under *one or two* trials that a man can be so denominated. Wherefore this word expresseth the life and spirit of that faith of Abraham, which is here proposed as an example. The end of the whole was that (επέτευχε της επαγγελίας, *compos factus est promissionis; obtinuit promissionem*) *obtained*, or enjoyed, *the promise*. Sundry expositors refer this “*obtaining* of the promise” to the *birth of Isaac*; but Isaac was upwards of twenty years old when the promise referred to was confirmed by the oath of God. It cannot therefore be that his birth should be the thing promised. Besides, he twice informs us, chap. xi, ver. 13—19; that the ancient patriarchs, among whom he reckoneth Abraham, received not the promises: wherefore Abraham’s *obtaining* the promise was no more than his enjoyment of the *mercy*, benefit, and privilege of it in every

state and condition as he was capable. He who is freely justified in Christ, and therewithal made partaker of adoption and sanctification, may well be said to have "obtained the promise." Some things there were therefore in the promises which could not be actually accomplished in his days; such were the birth of the BLESSED SEED, the numerousness and prosperity of his children according to the flesh, and the coming in of a multitude of nations to be his children by faith.

§6. "For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." The *light of nature* witnesseth that the *ultimate, supreme*, and most satisfactory way of confirming what is spoken or promised, is by an *oath*. And the apostle argueth not merely from what *men do* by common consent, as it were among themselves, but what the law and order of all things in subjection to God, *require*. For whereas men ought to acknowledge his supreme government over all, and when their own rites and concerns cannot be determined and peaceably fixed by reason or testimony, or any other instrument whereof they have the use, it is necessary that an appeal be made to God for his interposition, wherein all must acquiesce. This, therefore, being amongst men the highest assurance and ultimate determination of their thoughts, the holy God intending the like assurance in spiritual things, confirms his promise by his oath, that we may know, from what we ourselves ultimately centre in, there can be no accession of security. They swear by a greater, a nature superior to them; in whose power and at whose disposal they are. When one party avers one thing, and another something contradictory, and no evidence ariseth from the matter controverted, there must of necessity be amongst them (*ἀντιλογία κειραλος*) an end-

less strife and mutual contradiction, which would quickly bring all things to violence, confusion, and war; if there be no way to bring all parties to an acquiescence. For he who hath peremptorily asserted his right, will not afterwards voluntarily forego it, not only because of the loss of his *just claim*, as he apprehends, but also of his reputation in making an *unjust claim* thereto. In such cases an *oath* is necessary to the government and peace of mankind, as without which strifes must be either perpetual, or else ended by force and violence. This the apostle respects when he saith, "an oath among men is an end of strife." There is, therefore, to a lawful oath required a *just occasion*, or a *strife* among men otherwise undeterminable; a *lawful rule*, or government with power to propose and to judge about the difference on the evidence given, or a mutual consent of persons concerned; and, finally, a *solemn invocation of God*, as the supreme governor of the world, for the interposition of his omniscience and power, to supply the defects and weaknesses of the rules and rulers of human society. This brings in *the end* of an oath among men, (*πέραν ἀντιλογίας*) *a termination of strife*; that is, to put bounds and limits to contentions and mutual contradictions: the *way* whereby this is done is by interposing the oath (*ἐκ ἐξουσιᾶς*) *for confirmation*; for the avowing of the truth, rendering it firm and stable in the minds of men, which before did fluctuate about it.

If this be the nature, use, and end of an *oath* amongst men; if under the conduct of natural light, they thus issue all their differences, certainly the *oath of God* must of necessity be the most effectual means to issue all differences between him and believers, and to establish their souls in the faith of his promises against all difficulties whatever.

§7. (II.) *Obs.* 1. We have need of every thing that may evidence the stability of God's promises to be presented to us, for the encouragement and confirmation of our faith. As God redoubled the word to Abraham for the strengthening of his faith, so he does here by the apostle, that it might have the same effect upon us, while it intimates the *sincerity* of his intentions without reserve, and the *stability* of his purposes without alteration; and these things we have need of. If we think otherwise, we know little of the nature of faith, of our own weakness, the efficacy of the deceits of Satan, or the manifold oppositions which rise up against believing.

§8. *Obs.* 2. The grant and communication of spiritual privileges is a mere act or effect of sovereign grace. Even Abraham, who was so exalted by spiritual privileges, seems originally to have been tainted with the common idolatry which was then in the world, Josh. xxiv, 2, 3. "Your father dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor, and they *served other gods*. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood." It is true, the charge is *express* against Terah only; but it lieth against their *fathers* in general on the other side of the flood; and it being added that God took *Abraham* from the other side of the flood, he seems to have been involved in the guilt of the same sin whilst he was in his father's house before his call. As it was with Abraham, so it is with all those who in any age are made partakers of *grace*, or even spiritual *privileges*.

§9. *Obs.* 3. Where the promise of God is absolutely engaged, it will break through all difficulties and oppositions to a perfect accomplishment. No promise of God shall ever fail, or be of none effect. *We may*

fail, or come short of the promise, by our unbelief; but the promises themselves shall never fail. There have been great seasons of trial in many ages, wherein the faith of believers hath been exercised to the utmost about the accomplishment of the promises, (and eminently in the case of Abraham,) but the faithfulness of God in them all hath hitherto been victorious, and will be so for ever. Here remark:

(1.) In all ages the faith of true believers hath been greatly and peculiarly exercised; which hath been of singular advantage to the church. For the exercise of faith is that whereon the flourishing of all other graces doth depend. And from hence there hath been a treasure of fervent prayers laid up from the beginning, which shall in their proper season have a fruitful return.

(2.) Hence it was that in most ages of the church there have been mockers and *scoffers*, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming, for since the *fathers* fell asleep all things continue as from the beginning of the creation," 2 Pet. iii, 4. The "*fathers*" were they who received the promises; especially that of the coming of Christ. The sum of what they so declared was, that the elect of God should be delivered, and that judgment should be executed on ungodly men, by the coming of the Lord, Jude xiv, 15. But what now is become of these "*fathers*," with all their "*promises*" and preachments concerning them? Thus they *scoff* at all who dare own their expectation.

(3.) Some through haste and precipitation have fallen into manifold *mistakes* about the promise on the same account. Some have feigned to themselves other things than God ever promised; as the generality of the Jews looked for a carnal rule, glory and dominion, at the coming of the Messiah, which proved

their temporal and eternal ruin. But whatever of this or any other kind may fall out by the unbelief of men, all the promises of God are *yea and amen*, and will make their way through all difficulties to an assured accomplishment in their proper season.

§10. *Obs. 4.* Although there may be *privileges* attending some promises, *peculiarly appropriated* to some certain persons; yet the *grace* of promises is certain to all believers. So Abraham had *sundry personal privileges* and advantages communicated to him in and by this promise, yet the meanest believer in the world is *equally* partaker of the spiritual grace and mercy of the promise with Abraham himself. They are *all* by virtue hereof made heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

§11. The following short *observations* may here be added:

1. Whatever difficulty and opposition may lie in the way, patient endurance in faith and obedience will *infallibly* bring us to the full enjoyment of promises.

2. Faith gives such an interest to believers in all the promises of God, that they obtain even *those promises* (that is, the *benefit* and comfort of them) whose actual accomplishment in this world they do not behold.

3. That there is, as we are in a state of nature, a difference and *strife* between God and us.

4. The promises of God are *gracious proposals* of the only way and means for the ending of that strife.

5. The *oath* of God interposed for the confirmation of these promises is every way sufficient to secure believers against all objections and temptations, in all straits and trials about peace with God through Jesus Christ.

6. Where matters are in strife or controversy among men, (the peace and tranquillity of human societies

depending on the right determination of them) it is lawful for a Christian, being lawfully called, to confirm the truth which he knows by the interposition or invocation of the name of God in an *oath*, with this design—to put an end to strife. Wherefore I shall manifest these two things:

(1.) That a solemn oath is a part of the natural worship of God which the *light of nature* leads to, and is not only lawful, but in some cases a necessary duty to Christians, and *positively approved* by God in his word.

(2.) That there is nothing in the *gospel* that *contradicts* or controls this light of nature and divine institution, but there is that whereby they are *confirmed*. These points deserve our attention.

§12. For the *first*, we have the example of God himself, who, as we have seen, is said sundry times to *swear*, and whose oath is of signal use to our faith and obedience. Now if men had not had a sense and understanding of the *nature*, lawfulness, and obligation of an oath, from the *light of nature*, this would have been of no use, and the most solemn swearing of God was *before the law*, as in that instance which our apostle insists upon of his oath to Abraham. Hence holy men, *before* the giving of the law, did *solemnly swear* when a lawful occasion called for it. "So Abraham swear to Abimelek," Gen. xxi, 15. "And gave an oath to his servant," Gen. xxiv, 3—9. "So Jacob swear with Laban," Gen. xxxi, 52. "And Joseph swear to his father," Gen. xlvii, 31. And these had no respect to any *legal institution*, so that their practice should be thought to be reprov'd in those passages of the gospel which will be mentioned afterwards. Now that oaths were in use and approved of *under the law* is not denied.

The *second* proposition asserts, that there is in the New Testament *nothing against* this practice, yea there is much to confirm it. Considering the foundation whereon it is built, it is sufficient that there is not any thing in the gospel *contrary* to it, as it was a *positive institution*, but we may appeal to confirming evidence from prophecy and the New Testament. The following prophetic passage, Isa xlv, 23, is expressly applied to believers under the New Testament, "I have *sworn by myself*, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to *me* every knee shall bow, *every tongue shall swear*." See also Jerem. xii, 16. The apostle Paul swears to the truth of his own affirmations concerning his sincerity, Rom. ix, 1. 2 Cor. i, 2, 3. It was not concerning any doctrines he taught; *they* needed no confirmation by his oath, as deriving all their authority and assurance from divine revelation; but it was concerning his own heart and purpose, whereof there might be much hesitation contrary to the truth; when yet it was of great concernment to the church to have them truly known and stated. Had an oath been unlawful under the New Testament, God would not have continued the *use of it in any kind*, lest Christians should thereby be drawn to act against the rule. But this he did in that of the angel, who lifted up his hand and "swear by him who liveth for ever and ever." Rev. x, 5, 6. To give a great and an approved example of that which we may in no case imitate, doth not become the wisdom of God, and his care towards his church. Add to all these considerations, the express *approbation* given in this place by our apostle to the practice of solemn swearing among men to confirm the truth, and to put an end to strife, and

the lawfulness of an oath will be found sufficiently confirmed in the New Testament as well as the Old.

§13. There are two places in the New Testament which are usually pleaded in *opposition* to this liberty and duty, viz. Matt. v, 33—37; and Jam. v, 12.

It is evident that this place of James is derived from and hath an immediate respect to the words of our Savior; it being an express inculcation of his precept, and is founded on the same reason. The same answer, therefore, will serve both places; which will not be difficult when we have noticed the reasons and circumstances of our Savior's discourse. And to this end we may observe;

1. That all things prohibited by our Savior in the sermon to the Jews, were in themselves, and by virtue of the law of God, *antecedently unlawful*. Our Savior rends the veil of their pharisaical hypocrisy, discovers the corruptions of their traditions and interpretations of the law, declares the true nature of sin, and in sundry instances shews how, by these false glosses, the body of the people had been drawn into soul-ruining sins; whereby he restored the law so to speak, to its pristine glory. Let any one of the particulars mentioned by our Savior be considered, and it will be found—that this was before *unlawful in itself*, or declared so in the positive law of God. That therefore which is prohibited, "swear not at all," was somewhat that was *even then unlawful*, but practised on the false glosses of the pharisees upon the law. Now this was not solemn swearing in judgment and righteousness as before proved.

2. Our Savior expressly limiteth his precept to our *communication*: "Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay," ver. 37. There was amongst them, and that countenanced by the *pharisees*, a cursed way of

mixing oaths with men's ordinary communication. This blasphemous wickedness, as it was a direct violation of the *third commandment*, so it was frequently rebuked by the prophets. But like other public sins, it increased among the people, until their corrupt leaders, in compliance with them, began to distinguish what oaths in common communication were lawful, and what were unlawful, what were obligatory, and what were not. To eradicate this detestable practice, our Savior gives this general prohibition to all that would be his disciples, "swear not at all," that is, in communication, which is the first design of the third commandment.

3. The direction and precept of our Savior is given in direct opposition to the corrupt glosses and interpretations of the law introduced by *tradition*, and made authentic by the authority of the pharisees. This is evident from the express antithesis in the words; "you have heard what hath been said of old time,—but I say unto you." Now these were two:

(1.) That there was no evil in an oath at any time, but only in *swearing falsely*. They concluded that God's name was not profaned in swearing, unless a man *swear falsely*, that is forswear himself. Herein our Savior interposeth his divine interpretation, and, in opposition to the corrupt exposition of the pharisees, declares, that not only false swearing by the name of God in judgment or otherwise is forbidden in the command; but also that all vain interposition of the name of God in our *communication* is utterly prohibited! And it is hence evident to me, that no man ought voluntarily to take an oath unless the matter in controversy be *undeterminable without it*, and the authority be lawful that requires it.

(2.) They had found out a way how they might swear, and swear on, without the guilt of *perjury*, though what they swore were never so false; and this was, not to swear by the name of *God himself* (which if they did falsely they were perjured) but by the *heavens*, or by the *earth*, or *Jerusalem*, or the *temple*, or the *altar*, or their own *heads*; for such oaths and execrations were then, as well as now, in use in ordinary conversation. But herein also the filthy hypocrites had a farther reach, and had insinuated another pestilent opinion into the minds of the people, tending to their own advantage. For they had instructed them that they might freely swear by the *temple*, but not by the *gold* of it; and by the *altar*, but not by the *gift* that was upon it, Matt. xxiii, 16—19. For from the *gold* offered in the temple, and the *gift* brought to the altar, did advantage arise to these covetous hypocrites, who therefore beget a greater veneration in the minds of men towards *them*, than to the express institutions of God. In opposition to this corrupt practice our Lord declares, that in all these things there is a tacit respect to God himself and that his name is no less profaned in them than if it were expressly made use of.

§14. There are two rules of interpretation which we must in such cases always carry along with us:—that *universal* affirmations and negations are *not always to be universally understood*, but are to be limited by their occasions, circumstances, and subject matter treated of. Hence is the prohibition of our Savior here to be limited to *rash* and irreverent swearing; or otherwise it would be contrary to the light of nature, the appointment of God, and the good of human society. The other rule is—that where any thing is prohibited in one place, and allowed in another, *not the thing itself*

absolutely considered is spoken to, but the different modes, causes, ends, and reasons of it are intended. So here in one place swearing is *forbidden*, in others it is allowed, and examples thereof are proposed to us; wherefore it cannot be *swearing absolutely* that is intended in either place; but *rash*, causeless swearing is condemned in one, and swearing in weighty causes, for just ends, with the properties of an oath before insisted on, is recommended and approved in the other. I shall shut up the discourse with three *corollaries* from it.

1. That the custom of using oaths, swearing, cursing, or imprecation, in common discourse, is not only an open transgression of the *third commandment* which God hath threatened to revenge, but it is a practical renunciation also of the authority of Jesus Christ who hath so expressly forbidden it.

2. Whereas swearing by the name of God in truth, righteousness, and judgment, is an ordinance of God for an *end of strife* amongst men; *perjury* is justly reckoned among the worst and highest of sins, and is that which reflects the greatest dishonor on God, and tendeth to the ruin of human society.

3. Readiness in some to swear on slight occasions, and the ordinary impositions of oaths on all sorts of persons, without a due consideration on either hand of the nature, ends, and properties of lawful swearing, are evils greatly to be lamented, and in God's good time will be reformed.

VERSES 17--20.

Wherein, God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie. We might have a strong consolation, who have

fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

§1. The subject proposed. §2. (I.) The words interpreted. §3. The immutability of God's counsel. §4. Confirmed by an oath. §5. Two immutable things, what. §6. For consolation. §7. To whom. §8, 9, 10. Hope, the Christian's anchor. §11, 12. Jesus our fore-runner. §13. (II.) Observations. The sovereign will of God the spring of all grace. §14. In conjunction with infinite wisdom. §15. The purpose of God is immutable. §16—20. Other observations.

§1. **I**N this last part of the chapter two things are farther designed by the apostle;

First, an *explication* of the purpose and end of God in his promise.

Secondly, a *confirmation* of the whole privilege.

§2. (I.) "Wherein God willing." (*Ev ᾧ*) "*wherein*," that is, say many, (*εφ' ᾧ*) *for which cause*. Respect may be had—either, to the words immediately foregoing, "an oath among men is to them an end of strife." Whereas mankind doth consent herein, that an oath, in things capable of no other proof or demonstration, shall end controversies, satisfy doubts, and put an issue to contradictions, differences, and strife; God took the same way in an infinite, gracious condescension, to give full satisfaction in this matter to the heirs of promise. Or, this expression (*ev ᾧ*) may respect the whole subject matter; *in this matter* God swore by himself, that thereby the heirs of promise might not only be settled in faith, but moreover might receive therewith strong consolations; and this import of the words we shall adhere to. (*Θεὸς βελομενος*) *God willing*, is, *God in sovereign grace, and from special love, freely purposing and determining* in himself to do the thing expressed, for the relief and comfort of believers.

§3. "The immutability of his counsel." The *counsel* of God is the eternal purpose of his will; called his

"counsel" because of the infinite *wisdom* wherewith it is always accompanied. So that which is called the "good pleasure which he had purposed in himself," Ephes. i, 9, is termed the "counsel of his will," ver. 11. The *end of counsel*, or all rational deliberation, is to find out the true and stable directions of wisdom; hence the acts of the will of God, being accompanied with infinite *wisdom*, are called his *counsel*. For we are not to look upon the purposes and decrees of God as mere acts of will and pleasure, but as those that are effects of infinite *wisdom*, and therefore most reasonable, although the reasons of them be sometimes unknown to us. (Το ἀμετάβητον) *immutability* is (*quod μεταλίσσεται, nequit*) "what cannot be altered." But the design of God here was not to *make* his counsel unchangeable, but to *declare* it to be so. For all the purposes of God, all the eternal acts of his will, considered in themselves, are immutable.

This immutability God was willing "more abundantly to shew to the heirs of promise." (Εκδεικναι) *to shew*, manifest, declare, make known; it is not his counsel absolutely, but the *immutability* of his counsel, that God designed to evidence. His *counsel* he made known in his promise; but whereas God intended not only the confirmation of the *faith* of the heirs of promise, but also their *consolation* under all their difficulties and temptations, he would give a peculiar evidence of the "*immutability*" of that counsel which they embraced by faith as tendered in the promise. Yea he would do it (περισσώτερον) *more abundantly*; that is, beyond what was absolutely necessary in this case; he *swears by himself*, even he who hath taught us not to use his name but in things of great consequence and moment. This is the sense of the word if it respect the *assurance* given, which is *more abundant* than it

could be in or by a single promise. But the word (*περισσολέπον*) may refer to *God himself*, who gives this assurance; and then it is as much as *ex abundanti*; from a *superabounding* love and care he would confirm it by his oath. Either sense suits the apostle's design.

"To the heirs of promise," that is, believers, all believers, both under the Old and New Testament; who are here so called with respect to the *matter* of the promise or the thing promised, in which they have an *actual interest* by faith; for it is not the first believing of these heirs of the promise that they might be *justified*, which is intended, but their establishment in faith, whereby they may be *comforted*, or have "strong consolation."

§4. To this end God (*ἐμεσπεύσεν ὀρκῷ*, *fidejussit jurejurando*) *interposed by an oath*. He that confirmeth any thing by an oath is *fidejussor*, one that gives security to faith, and this in the law is *interventor*, one who interposeth or cometh between, and engageth himself to give security. This state of things is therefore here supposed: God had given out that promise, whose nature we have before declared. Hereon he justly requireth the *faith* of them to whom it was given. For what could any reasonable person require farther to give than sufficient ground of assurance? But although all things were clear and satisfactory on the part of God, yet many fears, doubts, and *objections* would be ready to arise on the part of believers themselves, as there did in Abraham; yet out of his infinite love and condescension he will give them a higher pledge and evidence of his faithfulness; he *mediated by an oath*; he *interposed* between the promise and the faith of believers, to undertake the accomplishment of it; and

swearing by *himself*, he takes it on his *life*, his *being*, his holiness, and his truth, to make it good.

§5. "That by two immutable *things*, (πραγμάτων) *acts*, and deeds, such as we make and *deliver* when we convey any thing from one to another. The word (πραγμα) denotes an *instrument* of assurance. But what need was there of *two such things*? Is it because *one* of these was weak, alterable, and such as may be justly excepted against, that the other is added to strengthen and confirm it? No, saith the apostle, both of them are *equally immutable*. Wherefore we must still carry along with us the infinite and inconceivable condescension of God in this matter, who, to obviate our temptations and relieve us under our weaknesses, is pleased to give this variety to his divine testimony, which he did *ex abundantia*; not only beyond what he was any way obliged to, but beyond whatever we could desire. (Εν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψευσαῖν Θεόν) *In or by which it was impossible that God should lie or deceive*. The word (ψευσαῖν) is not absolutely *to lie*, but by any means *to deceive* him who hath cause to trust what we say or do. The highest security among men consists in a *promise* confirmed with an oath; and this must be to them an end of strife, for higher they cannot go. But yet it is possible there may be a *lie* or deceit in their testimony, and he who trusts to them *may* be deceived, as it often happens; for although the things themselves are good, and such as would secure the interest of truth only, yet *men* that use them are changeable, yea liars. But it is God that makes use of them in our case, and therefore it is *impossible* that he should lie. The apostle speaks not of the nature of the things themselves, but of their *manifestation* with respect to us. God's immutability in promising, and impossibility in deceiving, are both equally from his nature; but the distinct

proposal of them is needful to our encouragement and establishment, as immediately added.

§6. "That we might have a strong consolation. (*ἵνα ἐχθόμεν*) "That ~~we~~ might have:" herein he builds on this principle, that whatever God promised and swore to Abraham, he did the same to all believers; so that every promise of the covenant belongeth *equally* to him and them. (*Παρακλησιν*) a *consolation*, that ariseth from the *assurance of faith*, and of our interest thereby in the promise of God: this is that which relieves our souls against all fears, doubts, and troubles,—and this consolation is (*ισχυραν*) *strong*, powerful, prevalent; "strong," so as to be prevalent against opposition; it is not the *abounding* of consolation in us, but the *prevalency* of the causes of it against opposition, that is intended.

§7. "Who have fled for refuge." (*Οἱ καταφύγοντες, qui cursum corripunt*) *that fly for refuge*; it is the judgment of many that here is an allusion to him who had slain a man unawares under the law, whose safety and life depended on his speedy flight to one of the cities of refuge, Numb. xxxv, 11, 12; and hereunto our translators had undoubtedly respect, whereon they rendered the word "flying for refuge." And indeed the word itself signifies such an action as is there ascribed to the manslayer; for the word (*καταφύγειν*, properly *cursum corripere*) hath respect to an *apprehension of danger*, or a real surprisal, whereon a man takes his *flight* for deliverance, and likewise *speed and diligence* in an endeavor to attain a proposed end, as the means for his deliverance, and whereby he hopes to find safety. And hereby doth the Holy Ghost express in a lively manner the state and condition of all the heirs of promise in this matter.

But what is this "hope set before us?" Hope, by a metonymy of the effect for the cause, may express the

promise itself, which is the cause and means of ingenerating hope in us; which I take to be the proper meaning of the place: and this hope is said to be "set before us," or *proposed to us*, viz. in the declaration of the promise, or the dispensation of the gospel. And it is more natural to allow of this *metonymical* expression in the word *hope*, than to admit of so rough a *catachresis* in the other part of the words, wherein the grace of hope within us should be said to be "set before us." "To lay hold," (*κρατῆσαι*, that is, *εἰς τὸ κρατῆσαι*, *fortiter apprehendere, constanter retinere.*) The signification of this word, frequently used by our apostle, I have on sundry occasions before declared; it is (*injecta in manu, totis viribus retinere*) "to hold fast what we lay hold on, with all our might and power." There seems in the whole metaphor to be an allusion to those who run in a race; for whereas they have a prize set before them, they first stir up themselves with all their strength to speed towards the mark, which, when they have attained it, they both lay hold fast on, and bear it away as their own.

§8. "Which (hope) we have." Having made mention of our *hope* with respect to the promise of God, he adds an account of the *use* of that hope in the course of our obedience. And he leaves herein the *metonymical* signification of the word, returning to that which is proper, namely, *the grace of hope* in us; but yet, as it includes its *object*, or the promise laid hold of by faith: This hope, then, is a firm *trust in God* for the enjoyment of the good things contained in his promises at the appointed season, raising in the soul an earnest desire after them, and an expectation of them. And for want of the knowledge of the nature of this grace many live without any benefit of its exercise. It *springs from faith*, and consists in *trust in God*, or it is the fiduciary act of faith on God in the promises, as it re-

spects the good things of it, as yet absent, future, un-enjoyed.

§9. "As an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." The souls of believers, it seems, have need of an *anchor*; the nature and use of which is *to hold fast* the ship, and to keep it steady in storms and tempests, when the art and skill of the mariners are overcome by the fierceness of the wind and sea, that they cannot steer the ship in its right course, nor preserve it from rocks or shelves. When ships are in their harbor, that they may not be tossed up and down at uncertainty, which our apostle alludes to, Eph. iv, 13, 14, an anchor is cast to keep the vessel steady to its posture. There are therefore two things supposed in this allusion:

1. That the souls of believers are sometimes exposed to *storms* and spiritual dangers; these storms are dangerous, because of their *violence* and their destructive *tendency*.

2. That the ordinary occasions of this life; and our duties towards God and men therein, are like the tradings of ships in their harbor; for therein a good and sure anchor is necessary; and without that which spiritually answers thereto, we shall *fluctuate* up and down in all we do, and be in continual hazard of ruin.

"Sure and steadfast." It is as to its *nature*, (αὐτοῦ) "*sure*," will not fail. it may be safely trusted to; the substance of it is firm, the proportion of it is suited to the burden of the ship; and it is no fair promising, and yet deceitful engine. It is also; as to its *use* (βελόναν) *steadfast* and firm, which no violence of winds and storms can either break or move from its hold. Such is genuine hope to the soul; it is *sure*, not a deceiving imagination; "It maketh not ashamed," Rom. v, 5, by any failure or disappointment. Groundless

presumptions are the deceitful engines whereby the souls of multitudes are ruined every day; of no more use than if the mariners should cast out a log, or a burden of straw, to stay their vessel in a storm. But hope built on faith is infallible: it is *firm*, invincible against all oppositions, not indeed from itself, but from the ground which it fixeth upon—Christ in the promise.

§10. “And which entereth into that within the veil.” Herein there is a *dissimilitude* in the things compared; for an anchor is cast *downwards*, and fixeth itself on the *earth* at the bottom of the sea; but hope ascendeth *upwards*, and fixeth itself in *heaven*, or in that which is there. But it should be here remarked, that to the *natural* allusion just mentioned, the apostle adds also one that is *typical*, which renders the whole context figurative. The “veil,” therefore, here alluded to, was that which parted the most holy place from the sanctuary or body of the temple. Now that which was denoted hereby with respect to Christ and his priesthood, were these *aspectable heavens* through which he passed in his ascension into the glorious presence of God. As an anchor stays not in the ways of the sea, as it cannot fix itself in the waters, but pierceth through them until it come to *solid earth*; no more can the hope of a believer fix itself on any thing under these heavens, but it pierceth through all until it come *within the veil*. And what is it that is within this *veil*? Not an ark and a *mercy seat*; not tables of stones and cherubims, the work of men’s hands; but the things signified by them; God himself on a throne of grace, and the Lord Christ as the High Priest of the church standing at his right hand. The *Father* as the author; the *Lord Jesus Christ* as the purchaser; the *covenant* as the conveyer of all grace;

which were all *typically* represented by things “with-
in the veil.” And the apostle makes use of this expres-
sion to instruct the Hebrews in the nature and use of
the old tabernacle institutions, and from thence in the
true nature of the priesthood of Christ, which he is
now returning to.

§11. “Whither the forerunner is for us entered,
even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the or-
der of Melchisedec.” The apostle concludes this long
digression, as he doth all his other discourses, in the
person of Christ, being the author and finisher of our
faith; with him he begins, and in him he ends contin-
ually. Here is given new *assurance* to the efficacy and
prevalence of hope fixed in the promise, as it enters
into that within the veil; namely, because *Jesus Christ*
our High Priest is there. It enters (οπου) *whither*
Christ is gone. Even heaven itself would be no safe
place for us to fix the anchor of our trust and hope in,
if Christ were not there. “Even (Ιησους) *Jesus*.” This
was the name under which he was reproached, revil-
ed, crucified, and slain as a malefactor, “they crucified
Jesus.” It is one and the same Jesus, who was hum-
bled and is exalted, who died ignominiously and lives
forever in glory.

§12. (Προδρομος υπερ ημων) *A forerunner for us*. It
is indifferent whether we render the words, *the fore-*
runner for us, that is, *our forerunner* is entered; or,
the forerunner is *entered for us*; both come to the
same purpose; and our translators so place the words
as if they inclined to the latter. A *forerunner*, (προ-
δρομος) *præcursor*, is one who, in an affair of public
concern, makes speed by himself to the appointed
place, to give an account of the affair about which he
is engaged. Commonly indeed such a *public harbinger*
is inferior to those who come after, being only that

and nothing more. But although Christ be a *forerunner also*, yet he is *more*; he is the person in whose hand lieth the whole affair; which office he discharged because of its greatness, and which could not be managed by any other. When Jesus entered into the holy place, he did it not merely for himself, but *to go before*, to conduct the whole church into the same glory. (Τεπ ημιν) *for us*; that is, all believers, the whole church in all places and times. Christ entering into heaven makes an open declaration, that he hath "led captivity captive, spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them; that he hath obtained his portion, and divided the spoil with the strong," Isa. liii, 12. That he hath rescued his church from the power of sin, Satan, death, and law. Heaven is now ready for us, whenever we are meet and ready for heaven. He is not said absolutely to enter into his glory; but to enter *as a priest*, as through a *veil*, as into the *holy place*, where he continues as our forerunner in the exercise of that office, "made an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec;" of which we must treat in the next chapter.

§13. (II.) *Obs. 1.* The sovereign will of God is the sole spring and cause of all the grace, mercy, and consolation that believers are made partakers of in this world. God wills it should be so. Man being fallen off from the grace and love of God, and being every way come short of his glory, had no way left to obtain any relief, any consolation. Wherefore these things could have no cause but in a free gracious act of the *sovereign will* and pleasure of God. And a due consideration of this sovereign spring of all grace and consolation will greatly influence our minds to all the principal duties of obedience. Such as *thankfulness* to God, Eph. i, 3—5, *humility* in ourselves,

1 Cor. iv, 7, and *compassion* towards others, 2 Tim. ii, 25, 26.

§14. *Obs. 2.* The purpose of God for the saving of the elect by Jesus Christ, is an act of *infinite wisdom*, as well as of sovereign grace; hence it is called the “counsel of his will,” or an act of his will, accompanied with infinite wisdom, which is the counsel of God. And among all the holy properties of his nature, the manifestation of whose glory he designed therein, there is none more expressly and frequently mentioned than his wisdom: hence our apostle shutteth up his contemplation of the ways and effects of this wisdom with that rapture of admiration, Rom. xi, 33—36, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or hath first given him, and it shall be recompensed to him again: for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, amen?” The whole issue of our contemplation of the wisdom of God in the eternal projection of our salvation by Jesus Christ, is only an *admiration* of that abyss which we cannot dive into, with an humble ascription of glory to God on its account. But, alas! we see many every day despise this wisdom of God. Hence all the principal parts of it, as the *incarnation* of Christ, the *hypostatical union* of his person, his *sacrifice* and oblation, the atonement and satisfaction made by his death, the *imputation* of his righteousness, the *election* of grace, with the power and efficacy of it in our *conversion*—are all either directly exploded as foolish, or wrested to senses suited to their own low and carnal apprehensions. And this sort of men swarm among us at this day like *locusts*, when a

northeast wind hath filled every place with them. I have named these things only in order thereby to reflect on that *horrible depravation* which, by the corruption of nature, is come upon the minds and *reasons* of mankind. Nor is it more evident in any than in those who boast of the contrary. We may learn from hence, that we have the greatest evidence of *thriving in spiritual light and understanding*, when we find our souls affected with, and raised to an holy *admiration* of the wisdom and counsel of God, declared in the gospel.

§15. *Obs. 3.* The purpose of God concerning the salvation of the elect by Jesus Christ, became immutable from hence,—that the determination of his will was accompanied with infinite wisdom. It was his *counsel*. He saw at once not only what was needful for accomplishing it, but also that which would infallibly effect it. Such was his *sending his Son to be incarnate*; and the dispensation of the grace of the new covenant, which is in its nature infallibly effectual to the end whereunto it is designed.

§16. *Obs. 4.* Infinite goodness, as acting itself in Christ, was not satisfied in providing and preparing good things for believers, but it would also shew and declare it to them for their present *consolation*. God was willing to “shew to the heirs of the promise;” and the *end* was, that they might have “strong consolation:” as it is with a good wise father and an obedient son. The father is possessed of a large and profitable estate; and as the son hath a present allowance suitable to his condition, so, being obedient, he hath a just expectation that in due time he shall enjoy the whole inheritance. This is usual among men, and what the law of nature directs to; for “parents are to lay up for their children, and not children for their parents.” But the

whole being yet in the father's power, it is *possible* he may otherwise dispose of it, and it may not come to the right heir; but now if his father sees that his son, on some occasion, wants encouragement; or, he putting him on any difficult service, where he may meet with storms and dangers, he will *shew him his deeds of settlement*, wherein he hath irrevocably confirmed to him the whole inheritance. So God deals with believers; although their state be thus secured by their being heirs of the promise, yet God knowing that they have a difficult work and warfare to go through, and what it is to serve him in temptations, for their encouragement and consolation, he produceth and sheweth them his irrevocable *deed of settlement*; namely, his promise, confirmed by his oath, whereby the whole inheritance is infallibly secured to them. He was free and willing to "shew it to the heirs of promise." He doth not, therefore, only propose his mind and will to us, as to grace and glory, but useth all ways possible to ingenerate in us to a participation of them; he doth every thing that may direct and encourage us to take a *steadfast* view of the excellency and immutability of his counsel in this matter. Hence a great part of the scripture, the revelation of God's will, is taken up in promises, exhortations, invitations, discourses, and expressions of love, kindness, and compassion; and in particular, although the promise itself was an abundant security for faith to rest upon as to the immutability of God's counsel, yet to obviate all pretences, and cast out all excuses, he confirms it with his oath. Hence naturally issue,

1. The unspeakable encouragement to believing, which is given to all to whom this counsel of God and its immutability is proposed. The essential truth of God and his oath are openly and manifestly engaged, that

nothing but unbelief shall keep off any from the enjoyment of the promise, and that all believers, whatever difficulties they may meet with in themselves, or objections against themselves, shall certainly and infallibly enjoy the promise and be saved: and the immutability of his counsel herein God hath made so evident, that there is no room for any objection against it. This is tendered unto you to whom the gospel is proposed. Greater encouragement to believing, and more certainty of the event, you shall never have in this world; you *cannot* have.

2. It discovers the heinous nature of unbelief. The gospel, which is a message of love, peace, mercy, and grace, yet never makes mention of unbelief but it annexeth damnation to it. "He that believeth not shall be *damned*." Those that will despise all that God will do, yea, with reverence be it spoken, all that he can do, to give them assurance of the truth and stability of his promises, have no reason to expect any thing but what he will do in a way of justice and vengeance.

§17. *Obs.* 5. It is not all mankind universally, but a certain number of persons, under certain qualifications, to whom God designs to manifest the immutability of his counsel, and to communicate the effects thereof. It is only the "heirs of promise" whom God intendeth. But herein two things, are to be considered; the outward revelation or *administration* of these things, and God's *purpose* therein. The *former* is made promiscuously and indefinitely to all to whom the gospel is preached, yet the grace of it was intended only to the elect, as our apostle declares, Rom. xi, 7. But why then doth God cause the declaration to be made promiscuously and indefinitely unto all, if it be some only whom he designs to a participation of the

effects of his counsel and the good things promised? I answer, the nature of the thing itself doth require this dispensation of the promise indefinitely to all, though the benefit of it be designed for some only. Such ways alone appear suited to glorify God and his grace in the *rational minds* of his creatures; for how could this be done but by the declaration and preaching of the promise, with commands, motives, and encouragements to believing?

§18. *Obs.* 6. God alone knows the due measures of divine condescension, or what *becomes* the divine nature therein. Who could, who durst have once apprehended, that the holy God should *swear by himself* to confirm his word and truth to such worthless creatures as we are? And as we are with holy confidence to make use of what he hath done in this kind, seeing not to do so is to despise the highest expression of his goodness, so we are not in any thing to draw divine *condescension* beyond divine *expressions*.

§19. *Obs.* 7. So unspeakable is the weakness of our faith, that we stand in need of inconceivable divine condescension for its confirmation. The immutability of God's counsel is the foundation of our faith; until this be manifest, it is impossible that ever faith and hope should be sure and steadfast. But who would not think that God's *declaration*, therefore, by way of promise, were every way sufficient thereunto? But God knew that we yet stood in need of more; not that there was want of sufficient evidence in his promises, but such a want of stability in us as stood in need of a superabundant confirmation.

§20. *Obs.* 8. Fallen sinful man stands in need of the utmost encouragement that divine condescension can exhibit, to prevail with him to receive and lay hold of the promise of grace and mercy by Jesus

Christ. There is nothing that we are so prone to as to distrust the promise of God; nothing that we are with more difficulty won over to than to mix them with faith. There are secret thoughts in the hearts of men (which are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked) that neither the promises nor threatenings of God are *true* in the terms and sense wherein they are proposed to them. They neither think that it shall be so bad with any as he threateneth, nor so well as he promiseth; they think that there are still some reserves and *latent conditions* in the promises and threatenings of God, and that God knows it shall be otherwise than they seem to pretend. Whatever may be the truth of the promise, yet they cannot conceive that God intends *them* therein; whereas yet there is no declaration or intention of God, whereby our duty is to be regulated, and whereon we shall be judged, but what is contained and expressed in the proposal of the promise itself. The curse of the law having, by the guilt of sin, been admitted to exercise dominion over the whole soul, it is a great thing to receive and admit of a testimony to the contrary, such as the promise is. What the law speaks, it speaks to them that are under it, as all men are by nature; and it speaks in the heart of every man, that "the sinner must die:" conscience complies also, and adds thereto its ready suffrage; this fixeth a conclusion in the mind, that so it will be, whatever may be offered to the contrary. The testimony of God in the promise is, that there is a way of life and salvation for sinners, and that God offereth this way and an interest therein *to us*; now nothing but the exceeding greatness of the power of grace can enable a guilty sinner, thus circumstanced, to "set to his seal *that God is true*:" on these grounds it is that poor sinners have such need of the reduplication of divine assurances.

§21. *Obs. 9.* Sense of danger and ruin from sin is the first thing which occasions a soul to look out after Christ in the promise. It is implied in the word (*καταφυγεῖν*) which we render "*fly for refuge.*" As the Lord Christ came to seek and save that which was lost, so if men are not sensible of their lost condition, of the sin and sickness of their souls, they will never in good earnest look out after him; and, therefore, those by whom conviction of sin and humiliation for it are despised, as they are by many, *Christ* himself also, who is the end of the law (and all its convictions) for "*righteousness,*" is despised.

§22. *Obs. 10.* A full conviction of sin is a great and shaking surprisal to a guilty soul; hence is such a one here tacitly compared to him who had killed a man at unawares. He was just before in a condition of peace and safety, fearing no man, but with quietness and assurance attending his own occasions; but having now slain a man at unawares, he finds all things on a sudden changed around him; fear from within, and danger from without, beset him on every hand. If he seeth any man, he supposeth him the *avenger of blood*; and if he seeth no man, solitude is dreadful to him. No otherwise is it with them who are thoroughly convinced of sin. They were "*alive,*" as the apostle speaks, Rom. vii, and at peace, fearing no more evil than they felt; perhaps persuading themselves that all things were well between God and their souls, or not much solicitous whether they were or no. In this state the commandment comes and discovers their guilt and danger, and unveils the curse which until now was hidden from them, as the avenger of blood ready to execute the sentence of the law. This being a thing which they never expected nor feared, fills them with great surprisals. Hence are those cries

of such persons, "What shall we do to be saved?" That argues a great distress and no small amazement; and those who know nothing of these things, are utterly ignorant both of sin and grace.

§23. *Obs.* 11. The revelation or discovery of the promise, or of Christ in the promise, is that alone which directs convinced sinners in their proper course and way. This is the "setting of an hope before them;" and they are called to turn into this strong tower, as prisoners of hope, that they might be brought out of the pit through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The manslayer probably may have many contrivances suggested in his mind how he might escape the danger to which he was exposed; but, alas! all these things did but keep him out of his way, and divert him from his duty; and the longer he entertained them in his thoughts, the more his danger was increased, and his life hazarded. It was the remembrance alone of the city of refuge, set before him in the divine appointment, that directed him to his proper work, and set him in his way to safety: just so it is with persons under convictions of sin.

§24. To these observations we may subjoin the following brief ones:

1. Wherever there is the least degree of saving faith, upon the first discovery of Christ in the promise, it will stir up the whole soul to make out towards him, and a participation of him. As faith is begotten in the soul by the promise, so the first natural genuine act of it tends to a farther participation of that promise.

2. It is the duty and wisdom of all those to whom Christ in the promise is once discovered, by any gospel means or ordinance once set before them, to admit of no delay of a thorough closing with him.

3. There is a spiritual strength and vigor required to the securing of our interest in the promise, (*αγκυρώσαι*) to lay fast and firm hold upon it.

4. The promise is an assured refuge to all sin-distressed souls who betake themselves to it.

5. Where any souls convinced of sin betake themselves to the promise for relief, God is abundantly willing that they should receive strong consolation.

§25. From what the apostle says about hope, "hope as an anchor," &c. we may observe,

1. That all true believers are exposed to storms and tempests in this world; this makes *anchors* so necessary for them. The wise God would not have provided an "anchor" for them, and enjoined its use, if he had not known they would be exposed to storms. He that dwells at peace in his house, of all things thinks least of an anchor; but we are to look for storms.

2. These storms would prove ruinous to the souls of believers, were they not indefeasibly interested by faith and hope in the promise of the gospel.

3. No distance of place, no interposition of difficulties, can hinder the hope of believers from entering into the presence of God, and fixing itself on him in Christ. It pierceth through the clouds, passeth through the heavens, stops not at their glorious veil, until it comes to the eternal ground of all grace and mercy.

4. The strength and assurance of the faith and hope of believers is invisible to the world; they enter in "within the veil," where no eye of reason can pursue them; however it is effectual to their good; for,

5. Hope firmly fixed on God in Christ, by the promise, will hold steady, and preserve the soul in all the storms and trials that may befall it; it is an anchor "both sure and steadfast."

6. It is our wisdom at all times, but especially in times of trial, to be sure that our anchor has a good holdfast in heaven; this alone will be our preservation and security that we are fixed on "that within the veil."

7. After the most sincere performance of the best of our duties, our comforts and securities are centered in Christ alone: our hope entering within the veil is a safe anchor, because Christ is there. And,

§26. From the character of Jesus, as our "forerunner," we may observe,

1. This same Jesus is our Savior in every state and condition; the same on the cross, and at the right hand of the Majesty on high; hence he is represented in heaven as a *Lamb slain*, Rev. v, 6.

2. The Lord Jesus being thus entered into heaven as our *forerunner*, gives us manifold security for entering in thither also at the appointed season.

3. Again, if the Lord Jesus Christ be entered into heaven as our forerunner, it is our duty to be following him with all the speed we can; and that we burden not ourselves with any thing that will retard us, Heb. xii, 1. Hence also,

4. We may see whereon the security of the church depends, as to the trials and storms which it undergoeth in this world. It is Jesus our forerunner who is within the veil, taking care of all our concerns, that is alone our security. And,

5. What will he not do for us, who in the height of his glory is not ashamed to be esteemed our *forerunner*? What love, what grace, what mercy, may we not expect from him? And,

6. When our hope and trust enter within the veil, it is Christ, as our forerunner, that in a peculiar manner they are to fix and fasten themselves upon.

CHAP. VII.

VERSES 1-3.

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him: to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first, being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, king of peace: without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.

§1, 2. The apostle's design and general scope. §3. The connexion of the words, and the subject stated. §4-6. (I.) The person spoken of. §7, 8. (II.) His kingly office. §9. (III.) The place where he reigned. §10. His present to Abraham was not a sacrifice. §11. (IV.) His sacerdotal office. §12. (V.) His meeting Abraham. §13. (VI.) Two eminent acts of his sacerdotal office; first, his blessing Abraham. §14. Secondly, his receiving tithes. §15, 16. Whether the law of tithing be of perpetual obligation. §17. (VII.) The name and title of Melchisedec. §18-21. Wherein he was made like the Son of God. §22-27. Observations. §28. Doctrinal Observations from the whole.

§1. **T**HE design of the apostle in this chapter is not to declare the *nature* or the *exercise* of the priesthood of Christ, though occasionally mentioned; for the *nature* of it, he had spoken to, chap. v, and treats of its *use* at large, chap. ix. But it is of its *excellency* and *dignity* that he discourseth in this place, and that not absolutely neither, but in comparison with the levitical priesthood, which method was both necessary, and directly conducive to his end; for if it were not *so excellent*, it was to no purpose to persuade *them* to embrace it, who were actually in the enjoyment of *another*. This, therefore, he designeth to prove upon principles avowed by themselves, with light and evidence taken from what was received and acknowledged in the Jewish church from the first foundation of it: to this end the apostle in the first place declares, that antecedently to the *giving of the law*, and the institution of

the Levitical priesthood; God had, without any respect thereto, given a *typical prefiguration* of this priesthood of Christ in one who was on all accounts *superior* to the future *Levitical priests*. This sacred truth, which had been "hid for so many ages in the church," and which undeniably manifests the certain future introduction of another and better priesthood, is here brought to light and improved.

§2. He in whom this prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ was made, is *Melchisedec*; concerning whom and his priesthood an account is given in the *first* part of the chapter, 1—11. The *second* part 11—24; consisteth in a double inference, with their improvements, taken from that discourse, as respecting Christ in his office. Having laid this foundation in the necessary removal of the *Aaronical priesthood*, and the pre-eminence of that of Christ above it, even whilst it continued,—he, *thirdly*, farther declares the nature of it, from the *dignity and qualifications* of his person, with the manner of the discharge of his office, ver. 24—28. For the apostle's design throughout, especially in this chapter and the three following, is to turn aside a double veil; the one *here below*, the other *above*; that *below* is the veil that covered all the *ordinances, institutions, ceremonies, and types* of the law; this is the veil that is to this day upon the Jews, that they cannot see to the end of the things that were to be done away. This he removes by giving a full, clear account of the mind of God in them, their use and signification. The other *above* is the veil of the *heavenly sanctuary*, which he opens to us in a declaration of the ministry of Christ our high priest therein. And under these heads, as the apostle plainly convinceth the Hebrews of the ceasing of their priesthood and worship, and that to the unspeakable advantage of

the church, so to us, he unfolds the principal design and end of all the Mosaical types of the Old Testament, with the institution of God in them. This may suffice as a plain view of the general scope of the apostle in these discourses.

§3. "*For* this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God," &c. The introduction of the whole discourse, and therein its connexion with what went before, is contained in the causal particle (*γὰρ*) *for*, which here respects the *reason why the apostle affirmed*, and insisted so much on it, that the Lord Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec; for, both the truth of my assertion (saith he) and the necessity of insisting thereon, will be sufficiently manifest, if you will but consider who this Melchisedec was, how he is represented in scripture, and what is affirmed of him. "*For (ὅτι) this Melchisedec.*" The demonstrative pronoun hath always an emphasis: the person of it is variously described—By his *name*, Melchisedec—By his *original office*, he was a king—The *place* of his rule or dominion, which was Salem; king of Salem—By *another office* added to the former, which principally belongs to the design of the apostle, and in connexion with which many other particulars occur, as in the sequel.

§4. (I.) The PERSON spoken of is variously described; but I shall in this place say no more of him than is necessary for understanding the text. But that he was the Son of God himself, in a prelibation of his incarnation, taking upon him the *form of a man*, is directly contrary to the text, wherein he is said to be made "*like* to the Son of God." And indeed all such opinions as make him more than man, are wholly inconsistent with the *apostle's design*, which is to prove that even *among men*, there was a priest and priest-

hood representative of Christ, and his priesthood superior to that of the law; which would have nothing of argument in it: if he were more than a man. Besides, he lays it down for a certain principle, that "every high priest is *taken from among men*," chap. v, 1; and therefore, if Melchisedec was an high priest, he was so taken also. Among those who grant him to be a *mere man*, very many, following the opinion of the Jews, contend he was Shem, the Son of Noah, who was certainly then alive, and of great authority in the world by virtue of his primogeniture. But this also riseth up in contradiction to our apostle, beyond all possibility of reconciliation; for he affirms that he was "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." We are, therefore, not allowed to interpret these things of him concerning whom most of them are *expressly recorded*.

§5. These things, therefore, are certain, and belong to faith in this matter:

First, That he was a *mere man*, and no more; for "every high priest was to be taken from among men," chap. v, 1; so that the Son of God himself could not have been a priest, had he not assumed our nature; besides, if he were more than a man, there were no *mystery* in it, that he is introduced in the scripture without father, without mother, without pedigree, for none but men have these things. And finally, without this conception of him there is no force in the apostle's argument against the Jews.

Secondly, That he came not to his office by right of *primogeniture*, which includes a genealogy, or any other *successive way*, but was raised up and immediately called of God; for in that respect is Christ said to be a priest "after his order."

Thirdly, That he had *no successor* on earth, nor could have; for there was no law to constitute an order of succession, and he was a priest only after an *extraordinary call*. These things belong to faith, in this matter, and no more.

§6. Two things every way consistent with the scope and purpose of the apostle, yea, eminently subservient thereto, I shall take leave to add; the one as my *judgment*; the other, as a *probable conjecture* only. And the *first* is, that although he lived and dwelt in Canaan, yet he was not of the *seven nations* that were in the curse of Noah devoted to bondage and destruction. For whereas they were therein by a spirit of prophecy cast out of the church, and devoted to destruction, God would not raise up among them, that is of their accursed seed, the most glorious ministry that ever was in the world, with respect to typical signification, which was all that could be in the world until the Son of God came. This I take to be true, and do somewhat wonder that no expositors have taken notice of it, seeing it is necessary to be granted from the analogy of sacred truth.

My *conjecture* is, that he was a person of the posterity of *Japhet*, the father of the *Gentiles* to be afterwards called. Noah had prophesied, that God should “enlarge the heart of *Japhet*,” or *persuade* him to dwell in the tents of Shem; Gen. ix, 27. To *Shem* he had before granted the present blessing of the covenant in those words: “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem;” ver. 26; and thereby the bringing forth of the promised seed was confined to his posterity. Hereupon, among them was the *church* of God to be continued, and on the matter confined, until Shilo came, to whom the gathering of the *Gentiles* was to be. And whereas

the land of Canaan was designed of God for *the seat of the church* in the posterity of Shem, he suffered it to be possessed by the seed of the *cursed Canaan*,—that in their destruction he might give a representation and security of the victory and final success of the Messiah and his church over all their adversaries. Before this came to pass, God, as I suppose, brought this Melchisedec, and some others of the posterity of Japhet, into the land of Canaan, even before Abraham had possession of it, and placed him there in a condition of office superior to Abraham himself. And this might be done,—that a claim might be put in, on the behalf of Japhet, to an interest in the tents of Shem. Melchisedec in those very places which were to be the seat of the church, took as it were *livery and seisin* for the gentile posterity of Japhet, which was in due time to be brought into the full possession of all the rights and privileges of it. Another reason might be;—to manifest, that the state of the Gentile converts in the promise and spiritual privileges of the church, should be far more excellent than was the state and privileges of the posterity of Shem whilst in their separate condition, “God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” But these things are submitted to the judgment of every candid reader.

I shall only add; that we have herein a signal instance of the sovereignty and wisdom of God. All the world was at that time generally fallen into idolatry and false worship. The progenitors of Abraham, though a principal branch of the posterity of Shem, “*dwelt beyond the river and served other Gods*,” Josh. xxiv, 2. Probably Abraham himself was not free from the guilt of that apostasy before his call. Canaan was inhabited by the *Amorites*, with the rest of the devoted nations, on the one hand, and the *Sodamites*

on the other. In the midst of these sinners above others was this man raised up, as the great type of Christ, with all his illustrious qualifications.

§7. (II.) Melchisedec, as to his OFFICE, was (βασιλευς) a king. So in the first mention of him, Gen. xiv, 18. "Melchisedec, king of Salem." Now whereas Christ is not any where said to be a "*king* after the order of Melchisedec," nor doth the apostle make any use of the consideration of *this* office in him; we may inquire, wherefore God placed him in that state and condition? And there seems to be two ends of it:

1. To make his *typical ministry* the more eminent and conspicuous. For his possessing *regal power* and authority would necessarily make him more conspicuous than if he had been only a *private man*. And moreover, by his royal wealth he was furnished for the costly discharge of his priestly office, in sacrifices and other solemnities.

2. Although he was not in his kingly office *directly typical* of Christ, yet he was by being a king the more meet to represent him as a priest, seeing he was to be the only *king and priest* of the church, in one person; and it may be observed, that although Moses, in Genesis, makes mention of the acts of both his offices, yet our apostle takes notice of those of the one sort only. For Moses informs us, in the first place, that when he went to meet Abraham, he brought forth bread and wine, that is, for the refreshment of him and his army. Now this was an act of *regal power* and munificence. This the apostle takes no notice of, but only of his "receiving tythes," and "blessing Abraham," which were both of them acts of *sacerdotal power*. Wherefore, although it was convenient he should be a king, yet in what he did *as king*, he

was no *type* of Christ, though there might be a *moral resemblance* between them. And,

§8. I see no reason why we may not hence collect these two things:

1. The Lord Christ as King of the church is plentifully stored with all spiritual provisions for the relief and refreshment of all believers in their various duties, and will give it out to them as their occasions require. For as Melchisedec represented Christ; so Abraham, in his battle and victory, was a type of all believers in their warfare and conflict with all their spiritual adversaries. Wherefore, as he and all his were refreshed by the kingly bounty of Melchisedec, so shall they be from the munificence and unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ.

2. Those who go to Christ merely on account of his *priestly* office, and benefits, shall also receive the blessing of his kingly power, in abundant supplies of mercy and grace. Abraham designed nothing with Melchisedec but the owning of his sacerdotal office, in giving him the *tithes* of all, and receiving his *blessing*. But when he met him he was refreshed also with his kingly bounty. Many poor sinners go to Christ principally, if not *only*, at the first, upon the account of his sacerdotal office, to have an interest in his sacrifice and oblation, to be made partakers of mercy and pardon. But when they come to him by faith, they find that he is a *king also*, ready, able, powerful to relieve them, and to whom they owe all holy obedience.

§9. (III.) This kingly office of Melchisedec is farther asserted by the specification of the PLACE where he reigned. He was king of *Salem*. There hath been great inquiry and much uncertainty concerning this place. But the most probable opinion is, that *Jerusalem* was the seat of his kingdom. For,

1. It was anciently called *Salem*, which name is afterwards occasionally applied to it, as that whereby it was known, Psal. lxxiv, 2. "In *Salem* is God's tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion." Where Jerusalem can only be intended. Afterwards some think that when it was possessed by the Jebusites, it began at first to be called *Jebus-Salem*, that is, Salem of the Jebusites, which by custom was transformed into Jerusalem. But the approved etymology from (יְרֵאָה) *vision*, and (שָׁלֵם) *peace*, so that the name should signify a sight or *vision of peace*, is certainly true, and probably given by God himself.

2. In the days of Joshua, the king of Jerusalem was called *Adonizedec*, a name of the same signification with Melchisedec, which, possibly from him, was the name of the kings who afterwards reigned in that city, Josh. x, 1—4.

3. Abraham dwelt at this time at Hebron in the plain of Mamre; and in his return from Hoba or Damascus, the way lay near to Jerusalem, as all maps yet declare; and Sychem was more to the north than that he should conveniently pass that way.

4. Jerusalem being designed to be the place where the Lord Christ was to begin and exercise his priestly office, it may well be supposed that there this illustrious type of him was to be manifested; especially, considering it was to be the seat of the church till the signification of the type was to be effected. But here we must remark, that,

§10. A supposition of such a *sacrifice of bread and wine* as that pleaded for by the Papists, from Gen. xiv, 17, 18, is contrary to the apostle's design, and quite destructive of it; for whereas he endeavoreth to prove that the priesthood of Melchisedec was far more excellent than that of Levi, he could not do it by this,

that he offered bread and wine in sacrifice, for so also did the Levitical priests, Lev. vii, 13, xxiii, 13—18. But all the excellencies which the apostle insisteth on consist in the dignity of his office, and the qualifications of his person, not in the matter of his sacrifice. The truth is, that no such thing as a *sacrifice* could be included in that expression, "He brought forth bread and wine." It was the manner in those countries, where any forces were on an expedition, that those in their way that were at peace with them brought forth supplies of bread and wine, or water, for their refreshment. For the neglect of this duty, wherein they break the laws of hospitality and friendship, did Gideon so severely punish the inhabitants of Penuel and Succoth, Judges viii, 5—7; xiii, 14—16. And the observance of this duty is recorded to the commendation of Barzillai the Gileadite, who sent refreshment to David and his army, saying, "The people are hungry and thirsty, and weary in the wilderness," 2 Sam. xvii, 27—29. In this state of things Melchisedec, being the neighbor, friend, and confederate of Abraham, when he came with his army and abode so near to him, "brought forth bread and wine" *for their refreshment*, which being a mere *civil* action; our apostle takes no notice of it. And they who can discover a *sacrifice* in this expression, have either more skill in the opening of mysteries than he had, or a better invention in coining groundless fables and imaginations of their own; wherefore we need not farther trouble ourselves with those forced and frivolous pretences. The reason why the apostle mentions Melchisedec as *king of Salem*, is to intimate his first prerogative above the *Aaronical* priests, in that he was a *king*.

§11. (IV.) Melchisedec is here principally regarded as bearing ANOTHER OFFICE; he was "*priest* of the most high God.

First, He was a *priest* by special institution. Certain it is, that the institution of the office, and the representation of it in the person of Melchisedec, gave great light and instruction into the nature of the first promise, and the work of the *blessing seed* which was to be exhibited. In this general assertion that he was a *priest*, two things are included:—that he was truly and *really a man*, and not an angel or an appearance of the Son of God prelusory to his incarnation. For "every priest is taken from among men," chap. v, 1; of the same common nature with other men, and in the same state until he be separated to his office. And so was Melchisedec, a man called out from among men, or he was not a priest. Again—that he had an *extraordinary call* to the office, for he falleth likewise under that other rule of our apostle; "No man taketh this honor unto himself unless he be called of God," Heb. v, 4. But of what nature this call was, and how he received it, cannot positively be determined in particular; however, this call was *personal*, in some act of God towards him, wherein himself and no other was concerned. He was not set apart to his office by any *outward unction*, or ceremonious investiture. These things belong purely to the law and Aaronical priesthood. Besides, there was none in the world *greater* than he, nor nearer to God, to confer this office upon him, as Aaron was consecrated by Moses. For in the authoritative collation of an office there is a *blessing*, and without controversy, he who blessed is *greater* than he who is blessed by him. And therefore God would not make use of any outward means in the call or the separation of the Lord Christ to his offices,

because there was none in heaven or earth greater than he, or nearer to God to be employed therein.

Secondly. He was the "*priest of the most high God.*" He was (לֵאמֹל כֹהֵן) "*a priest to God.*" This determines the sense of the word *cohen* to the office of the priesthood. Where God is proposed as to its object, *a priest of God or unto God*, none can be signified but one in the priestly office. Again: He was a priest to "*the most high God.*" This is the first time that this title is ascribed to God in the scripture, which afterwards is frequently repeated; and is much of the same import as *God above, God over all, the God of heaven, and the most high.* And it is either *descriptive* or *distinctive*:

1. As it is *descriptive*, the majesty, power, and authority of God over all are intended. The most high God is the glorious God, with whom is terrible majesty.

2. As it is *distinctive*, it respects other Gods, not in truth and reality, but in reputation. For so there were then Lords many and Gods many in the world. They were all earthly; and though some of them had their *being* above, as the sun, moon, and host of heaven, yet they had all their deity from beneath; rather, it never had any existence but in the deluded imaginations of the sons of men: in opposition to them, as distinguished from them, God is called the *most high* God. So Abraham expounds this title, ver. 22, "*The most high God, possessor of heaven and earth,*" which he gives as a reason why he would not take ought of the king of Sodom, seeing that he was the servant of that God who disposed of all things in heaven and earth; his God could make him rich without help of the king of Sodom. Wherefore God, under this consideration of "*the most high God,*" was the principal

object of the faith of believers in those days. And this also was the principal part of their profession, that they served the most high God alone, in opposition to all the false and dunghill deities of the earth. The *Socinians*, in all their disputes against the deity of Christ, always make use of this name, and continually respect it: "*Christ, say they, is not the most high God.*" A God they will allow him to be, but not the *most high* God. But whereas this name is used in *distinction* only from all false Gods, if their Christ be a God, but not on any account the *most high* God, he is a false God, and as such to be rejected. See Jer. x, 11.

§12. (V.) The apostle describes this Melchisedec from that ACTION of his, with its circumstances, which gave occasion to the whole account of him. "Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings." On this occasion only is he introduced in the scripture story, as a new person never heard of before, nor ever afterwards to be made mention of, as to any of his own concerns. Abraham did not only overthrow the whole *army* of the kings, but he slew the *kings themselves*, as is expressly affirmed, Gen. xiv, 17. Hence is he here said to return from the "slaughter of the kings;" for as he includeth in it the destruction of their host, so it was that which signalized his victory. And the (*αυτοθρία*) *spoils* afterwards mentioned were the *opima spolia* taken from the kings themselves. As Abraham thus returned with honor and glory, made very great in the eyes of the nations round about, as he staid in the king's dale, to deliver to the King of Sodom his goods and people with a royal munificence becoming a servant of the most high God, who had a better portion than all could be found amongst the spoils; Melchisedec, knowing the state of things, and the promise made to Abraham, comes out unto him

for the ends mentioned. This meeting of Melchisedec and Abraham, after Abraham had gotten the victory over all his adversaries, was a type and representation of the glorious meeting of Christ and the church at the last day, when the whole church shall have finished its warfare and be victorious over the world, sin, the law, death, and hell. Then will the Lord Christ bring out the stores of heaven for their eternal refreshment, with the fulness of his blessing, and all things shall issue in the glory of the most high God. All the promises are "to him that overcometh."

§13. (VI.) Melchisedec is farther described by two ACTS of his sacerdotal power, or office, which he exercised on this occasion of meeting Abraham. He *blessed* him, and then—he *received tithes* of him.

First, He met Abraham and *blessed* him. This solemn benediction is fully expressed, Gen. xiv, 19, 20, "And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God who hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand." There are two parts of this blessing:—that which hath Abraham for its object, a *blessing of prayer*;—that which hath God for its object, a *blessing of promise*. Our apostle seems to take notice only of the first. But the truth is, the other part whereby he blessed God, being on the account of Abraham, and as it were in his name, it belongs also to the blessing wherewith he was blessed. As to the nature of it, blessings in general are the means of communicating good things according to the power and interest of them that bless; Gen. xxxiii, 11; so also are *curses* of evil. Hence it is God alone that absolutely can either bless or curse, for he only hath sovereign power of all good and evil. And therefore he says to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse

them that curse thee," Gen. xii, 3; because he is over them and all their blessings and curses. There are also various *sorts* of blessings. The apostle treats only of such blessings as evidently and unavoidably prove him that blesseth to be *superior* to him that is blessed, ver. 7.

Sacerdotal blessings were *authoritative* on a double ground.—Of common right and equity.—Of special institution.

1. Of common right and *equity*. For as he was appointed to act for men with God, so it is reasonable that he should pronounce blessings upon them in the name of God. And as he ministerially carried their gifts, offerings, and services to God, so in like manner he should return his acceptance and blessings unto them. And we may take notice in our passage, that—Whatever be the interest, duty, and office of any to act in the name of others *towards God*, in any sacred administrations, the same *proportionably* is their interest, power, and duty to act towards them in the name of God in the *blessing* of them. And therefore ministers may authoritatively bless their congregations. It is true they can do it only *declaratively*, but withal, they do it *authoritatively*, because they do it by virtue of the authority committed to them for that purpose.

2. There was an especial *institution* of sacerdotal benediction under the Old Testament, recorded Numb. vi, 22—27, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, on this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying, the Lord bless and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace: and they shall put my name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Their putting the *name*

of God upon the people, was their praying for and pronouncing blessings on them in his name, by virtue of this institution. This special institution, I acknowledge, was after the days of Melchisedec, and the cessation of his office, as to actual administration. But it is apparent, and may be proved, that many, if not most of those sacred institutions, which were given in one system unto Moses, were singly and gradually given out by inspiration and prophecy to the church *before* the giving of the law; only at Sinai their number was increased, and the severity of their sanction heightened. Thus this sacerdotal benediction was but a transcript from, and expressive of, that power and form of blessing, which Melchisedec as a priest, used before. And from what hath been spoken we may gather, what was the *nature* of this blessing of Melchisedec wherewith he blessed Abraham. For it had the nature of a blessing *in general*, whereby one man may bless another, in that it included both *prayer* for him, and *thanksgiving* to God on his account. And it was *authoritative* and *sacerdotal*; he was the priest of the most high God, and he blessed Abraham by virtue of his office. It was also *prophetical*, proceeding from an immediate inspiration, whereby he declares the confirmation of the great blessing promised to Abraham. "Blessed be Abraham."

§14. The *second* sacerdotal act, or exercise of priestly power, ascribed to Melchisedec, is, that he *received tithes of all*. "To whom Abraham also gave the tenth of all." As Abraham gave them in a way of *duty*, so Melchisedec received them in a way of *office*. The word (*παντων*) of *all*, is limited to the *spoils* which he took of the enemies, ver. 4, "To whom Abraham gave the *tenth of the spoils*." Whereby he acknowledged him to be the priest of the most high God, and

the type of the Son of God incarnate. This receiving of tithes by Melchisedec was a sacerdotal act. For,

1. The tenth thus given was primarily given to God; and he who received them, received them as God's officer and in his name. And,

2. The things that were fit of this sort, were actually to be offered in sacrifice unto God.

3. The matter was afterwards precisely determined in the law, wherein all tithes were appropriated to the priest. I observe these things, only to shew that the apostle had very just ground to infer from hence the sacerdotal power of Melchisedec, and his pre-eminence in that office above Abraham.

§15. There is great inquiry usually on this place, whether tithes be due by the light of nature, or at least by such a *moral positive* command of God, as should be perpetually obligatory on all worshippers to the end of the world. This many contend for; first, because tithes were paid before the law as well as under the law; secondly, because seemingly confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ himself. And this, it is contended, is a certain argument, of that which is moral and unalterable, namely, the appointed usage of it, *before* the law, *under* the law, and, as they suppose, under the gospel after the expiration of the law of ceremonies. And it seems to be, if there be the *same reason* of the law in all these seasons; for otherwise it is not so. For instance, it is supposed that the *eating of blood* was forbidden *before* the law, and assuredly it was so *under* the law, and is so in the New Testament, Acts xv; which yet does not prove it to be morally evil, and perpetually forbidden; for it is not so upon the *same grounds* and reasons: but where not only the subject matter, but the *formal reason* of the command is the same, there it is of *natural equity* and unalterable.

§16. I shall not enter into any long digression about this controverted subject. Be the law and institution what it will, nothing is more certain than that for men to live in pleasure and idleness, according to the pomp, vanities, and grandeur of the world, neither rising early nor going to bed late, nor spending their time or strength in the service of the church, according to the duties required of all the ministers thereof in the gospel, to sing unto themselves "that tithes are due to them by the appointment and law of God," is a fond imagination; a dream that will fill them, when they shall awake, with endless perplexity. But as to the question in hand,

1. If the dedication of a *certain portion* be intended, it is with me past all doubt, that a *bountiful* part of our enjoyments is to be separated for the use and service of the worship of God, particularly for the comfortable and honorable support of them that are in the ministry; and I cannot but wonder how some men can satisfy their consciences in this matter, in circumstances I shall not now name.

2. If the strict *legal course of tithing* be intended, it cannot be proved from this text, nor from any other instance before the law; for Abraham gave only the tenth of the *spoils*, which were not tithable by law. For if the places taken or destroyed in war were anathematized, as Jericho was, and also Amalek, no portion was to be reserved under a pretence of sacrifice, or any other sacred use, as Saul found to his cost; and if they were anathematized, all the spoils were left entirely to the people that went to the war, without any sacred decimation. And as for the instance of Jacob, who *vowed* unto God the *tenth of all*, it is so far from proving that the tenth was due by virtue of any law, that it proves the contrary; for had it been

so, it could not have been the matter of an *extraordinary* vow.

3. The precise law of tithing is not confirmed in the gospel; for that saying of our Savior, approving the tithing of mint and cummin, evidently respects that *legal institution*, which was then in force, and could not be violated without sin; and other mention of tithes in the gospel there is none.

4. Whereas by the *light of nature*, all rules of reason and positive institutions, a portion of what God is pleased to give to every man is to be returned to him in the way of his worship and service, wherein it may be used according to his appointment; and whereas *before* the giving of the law sundry holy men fixed upon the *tenth part*, as that which was meetest to be so dedicated unto God, probably not without some special conduct of the Holy Spirit; and whereas this was afterwards *expressly confirmed* under the law by positive institutions, the equity whereof is urged in the gospel; it is the *best direction* that can be given to any, what proportion of their estate should be set apart for this purpose. Herein, I confess, so many *circumstances* are in particular cases to be considered, as that it is impossible any *one certain rule* should be prescribed to all persons.

5. On these suppositions it is that the apostle, treating of this matter, makes no use of the right or *law of tithes*, though directly to his purpose, if it had not been abrogated; for, intending to prove that the *ministers of the gospel* ought to be liberally supported in their works with the earthly things of them to whom they administer the things of God, he argueth from the *light of nature*, the *general equity* of other cases, the *analogy* of legal institutions, the rules of justice, with the special institution of Christ in the gospel, but makes

no mention of the natural or legal right of *tithes*, 1 Cor. ix, 7—15.

§17. (VII.) The apostle pursues his design and argument from the NAME AND TITLES of Melchisedec, with their interpretation: “first by interpretation, king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.” We shall consider herein—the names themselves, with their interpretation—the grounds of the apostle’s arguing from this interpretation of names—what is *intended* in them, or what he would have us learn from them—their *order*, which he particularly observes.

1. He respecteth his proper name, MELCHISEDEC; for the fancy of some that *Sedec* was the place where he first reigned, as he did afterwards at *Salem*, is very weak; for then his *person* must be utterly *without a name*. Besides, had it been so, he would not have been called *Melchisedec*, but said to be *Melch Sedec*, as he is said to be *Melec Salem*. Some would have the *yod* (in *Melchi*) to be a *pronoun affix*; and then the meaning of the word is, “*my king*,” and on this supposition they would render it “*my righteous king*.” But there is nothing more ordinary in the composition of names than the interposition of *yod*, to soften the pronunciation. So in Adonisedek, Adonibezek, Abimelech, &c. And so the whole name is properly interpreted, and rendered by our apostle, (βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης) *a king of righteousness*. Again, his *title* is (סלש שלם) “the *king of Salem*, of which *place* we have spoken before. This is, by interpretation, saith our apostle, (βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης) “the *king of peace*,” and, without attending to idle inquiries, we ought to acquiesce in the authority of the apostle, who knew better than us all the significations of these names.

2. It may next be inquired, what *ground* the apostle had to argue from the signification of these names? The apostle justly takes it for granted, in general, that every thing in the story of Melchisedec was mystical and figurative. And it was usual under the Old Testament to have *names given* to children by a spirit of prophecy, as to Noah, Peleg, and others; also to have men's *names changed* upon some great occasions; which was highly significant. Hence people often gave others or themselves *other names* on some occasions wherewith they were affected. And hence it is that we find the same persons so frequently called by *diverse names*, which gives no little difficulty in genealogies. But where this was done by *Divine warranty*, it was doctrinal and prophetically instructive; and at whatever period of life *Melchisedec* had this name, certain it is that it was given him by *Divine direction*: and as for the name of the place where he reigned, Salem, I am persuaded that God himself, by some intimation of his mind, gave that name "*peace*" first to that city, because there he designed not only to rest in his typical worship for a season, but also, in the fulness of time, there to accomplish the great work of *peace-making* between himself and mankind. Hence it was afterwards, by the same guidance, called *Jerusalem*, or "a vision of peace," because of the many *visions* and prophecies concerning the spiritual and eternal peace which was to be wrought and published in that place. Wherefore our apostle doth justly argue from the signification of these names, which were given both to the person and place, by Divine authority and guidance, that they might teach and fore-signify these important things.

3. The interpretation of the names being proper, it must be inquired, how this man was "*king of right-*

eousness and peace." These names have respect to his *relative state*, and were given him as a type of it. *Really*, he was a righteous and peaceable king; *typically*, he was the "king of righteousness and peace;" being the author, cause, and dispenser of righteousness and peace to others; as God is said to be "the Lord our righteousness," and "the God of peace."

4. The last thing that the apostle observes from these names and titles in their *order*, wherein it is natural that the name of a man should precede the title of his rule. "First, king of righteousness, and afterwards king of peace." *Righteousness* must go first, and then *peace* will follow after. So it is promised of Christ and his kingdom, that "in his days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth," Ps. lxxii, 7. First they are made *righteous*, and then they have *peace*.

§18. (VIII.) The apostle proceeds yet to other instances in the description of Melchisedec, wherein he was MADE LIKE TO THE SON OF GOD, verse 3, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." These things must be taken in a *qualified* sense, with respect to his *office*; therein, or as he bare that office, he was "without father, without mother, without descent," &c. He was (*αγενεαλογητος*) *without descent*, we say; but the Greek word (*γενεαλογία*) from whence the other is derived, is a *generation*, a *pedigree*; not absolutely, but as rehearsed, described, *recorded*. The positive term (*γενεαλογητος*) denotes one whose stock and descent is *entered upon record*; and so, on the contrary, the negative term (*αγενεαλογητος*) is not he who hath *no descent*, no *genealogy*, but he whose descent and pedigree is *no where entered or recorded*. Thus the apostle himself plainly expresseth this word, verse 6, (*ὁ μὴ*

γενεαλογημενος ἐξ αὐτῶν) *whose descent is not counted*, that is, reckoned up in record. Thus was Melchisedec. He was assuredly born, and did no less and certainly die than other men; but neither of these are *recorded* concerning him. We have no more to do with him, to learn from him, nor are concerned in him, but only as he is *described* in the scripture, and there is no mention therein of the beginning of his days, or the end of his life. Whatever therefore he might have in *himself*, he had none to *us*. But whence was it that Moses should introduce so great and excellent a person as Melchisedec, without any mention of his race, or stock, of his parents, or progenitors; of his rise or fall, contrary to his own custom in other cases, and contrary to all rules of useful history? The true cause of the omission of all these things is the same with that of the institution of his priesthood, and the introduction of his person in the story. And this was, that he might be more express and signal *representative* of the Lord Christ in his priesthood. Wherefore, whereas the priesthood of our Lord was to depend on no such descent (for it is evident that our Lord sprang from Judah, whereof Moses spake nothing of the priesthood) the Holy Ghost thought meet to mind them, that a priest was to come without respect to any such descent or genealogy, in that he was to be after the order of Melchisedec who had none, Psalm c, 4. This is the true and only reason why in the historical account of Melchisedec, as the priest of the high God, there is no mention made of father, mother, genealogy, beginning of life or end of days.

§19. And we may herein consider the sovereign wisdom of the Holy Ghost in bringing forth truth to light according as the state of the church requires. And first he proposeth only a naked story of a person

that was a type of Christ, and that obscurely and sparingly. Something the men of the age wherein he lived might learn by his ministrations, but not much. For that which was principally instructive in him for the use of the church was not of force until all his circumstances were forgotten; and the church was now to be instructed, not so much by what he *was*, as what was *recorded* of him, wherein the scripture superseded all tradition that might be of him in the world. Yea, the contrivance of any tradition concerning his *parents, birth, and death*, had been contrary to the mind of God, and what instruction he intended the church by him. Afterwards when, it may be, all thoughts of any use or design of this story in Moses was lost, and the church was fully satisfied in a priesthood quite of another nature, the Holy Ghost, in one word of prophecy, Psalm c, 10, instructs the church, not only that the things spoken concerning Melchisedec were not so recorded for his sake, or on his own account, but with respect to *another priest* which was afterwards to arise, by him represented; which gave a new consideration, sense, and design of the whole story; but moreover, gives it to know that the priesthood which it then enjoyed was not always to continue, but that *another*, of another nature, was to be introduced, as was signified long before the institution of that priesthood which they enjoyed. And as this was sufficient for the use and edification of the church in those days, yet it was left greatly in the dark as to the full design and meaning of these things. And therefore it is evident that at the coming of our Savior, and the accomplishment of this type, the church of the Jews had utterly lost all knowledge and understanding of the mystery of it, and the promise renewed in the Psalm. For they thought it strange

that there should be a priest that had no genealogy, no solemn consecration nor investiture, with his office. Wherefore, until the fulness of time, the church was not able to bear the true understanding of this mystery, and now they could no longer be without it. Hence it is here so fully and particularly declared by our apostle.

§20. Our next inquiry is, wherein Melchisedec was typical of Christ, or what of all this belongeth to the following assertion, that "he was made like unto the Son of God," that is, so described as that he might have a great resemblance of him. It is not of the *person* of Christ absolutely, nor of either of his natures distinctly, that our apostle treateth, but merely with respect to his office of *priesthood*. And herein all the things mentioned concur in him, and make a lively representation of him. It was utterly a new doctrine to the Hebrews that the Lord Christ was a priest, the only high priest of the church, so as that all other priesthood must cease. And their chief objection against it was, that it was contrary to the law; because he was not of the line of the priests, neither as to father or mother or genealogy, nor had any to succeed him; but our apostle concludes, that had he been on the earth, that is, *under the order of law*, he could not have been a priest, there being others who by virtue of their descent had alone the right to it, Heb. viii, 3, 4. Wherefore God in these things instructed the church, that he would erect a priesthood which should no way depend on natural generation, descent, or genealogy; whence it inevitably follows, that the state of the priesthood under the law was to cease, and to give place to *another*, which our apostle principally designs to prove. Here he calls him "the Son of God," to intimate that although Melchisedec were an excellent

person, yet was he infinitely beneath Him whom he represented. He was not the Son of God, but he had the honor in many things to be "made like unto him." It is affirmed concerning him that he "*abideth a priest for ever.*" Things are so related concerning him in scripture, as that there is no mention of the ending of the priesthood of his order, nor of his own personal administration of his office. Hence is he said to "abide a priest for ever." This was what our apostle principally designed to confirm, that there was in the scripture before the institution of the Aaronical priesthood, a representation of an eternal, unchangeable priesthood to be introduced in the church, which he demonstrates to be that of Jesus Christ.

§21. It may not be amiss here to represent the several particulars wherein the apostle would have us to observe the *likeness* between Melchisedec and Christ, or rather the especial excellencies and properties of Christ that were represented in the account given of the name, reign, person, and office of Melchisedec. As,

1. He was said to be, and he really was, and he only, first "the king of righteousness," and then "the king of peace;" seeing he alone brought in everlasting righteousness and made peace with God for sinners. And in his kingdom alone are these things to be found.

2. He was really and truly the "priest of the high God," and properly he was so alone. He offered that sacrifice, and made that atonement, signified by all the sacrifices offered by holy men from the foundation of the world.

3. He blesseth all the faithful, as Abraham the father of the faithful was blessed by Melchisedec. In him they were to be blessed, by him they are blessed,

through him delivered from the curse and all the fruits of it, nor are they partakers of any blessing but from him.

4. He receiveth all the homage of his people, all their grateful acknowledgments of the love and favor of God in the conquest of their spiritual adversaries, and deliverance from them, as Melchisedec received the tenth of the spoils from Abraham.

5. He was really without progenitors or predecessors with respect to his office, nor would I exclude that mystical sense from the intention of the place, that he was without father as to his human nature, and without mother as to his Divine.

6. He was a priest without genealogy, or derivation of his pedigree from the loins of Aaron, or any other that ever was a priest in the world, and moreover, mysteriously was of a generation which none can declare.

7. He had in his Divine person, as the high priest of the church, neither beginning of days nor end of life, as no such thing is *reported* of Melchisedec.

8. He was *really* the Son of God, as Melchisedec in many circumstances was made *like* unto the Son of God.

9. He alone abideth a priest for ever, whereof we must particularly treat afterwards.

§22. And we may observe, from the call of Melchisedec;

1. That God can raise the greatest light in the midst of the greatest darkness, as Mat. iv, 16.

2. He can raise up instruments to his service and to his glory, when, where, and how he pleaseth.

3. This signal prefiguration of Christ in the nations of the world, at the same time when Abraham received the promises for himself and his posterity,

gave a pledge and assurance of the certain future call of the Gentiles to an interest in him.

4. And may we not observe, that God in his sovereign pleasure gives various intervals to places, as to the enjoyment of his worship and ordinances. This Jerusalem, which was at first ennobled by the priesthood of Melchisedec, was afterwards left for a long season to the idolatrous Jebusites. In process of time it was visited again, and made the fixed station of all solemn Divine worship, as it is now left unto salt and barrenness.

5. And we may observe, that acts of munificence and bounty are memorable and praise-worthy, though they no way belong to things sacred by virtue of Divine institution. So was this bringing forth of bread and wine by Melchisedec to refresh Abraham and his people, though there was nothing of sacrifice therein.

6. It is acceptable with God that those, who have labored in any work or service of his, should receive refreshments and encouragements from men. For, as such an acceptable service is the relief given to Abraham and his people, by Melchisedec, celebrated.

§23. On the priesthood of Melchisedec other *observations* offer.

1. Every one is that in the church, and nothing else, which God is pleased to make him. Wherefore, for us to rest in God's vocation is our honor and our safety, as well as our duty. For,

2. Where God calleth any one to a singular honor and office in the church, it is in him a mere act of his sovereign grace. So he took this Melchisedec who had nothing of stock, race, descent, or succession, to recommend him, but as one, as it were, newly sprung out of the earth, and raised him to the highest dignity that any man in those days was capable of. Let us not therefore repine or murmur at any of God's deal-

ings with others, nor envy because of his gifts bestowed on them. May he not do what he will with his own?

3. A Divine call is a sufficient warranty for the regular performances of them who are so called, and the obedience of others to them in their work or office. By virtue hereof this Melchisedec arose in the midst of the nations of the world, took on him a new office and power, being owned and submitted to therein, by Abraham and all believers.

4. The first *personal* instituted type of Christ was a *priest*; this was Melchisedec. There was before *real* instituted types of his work, as sacrifices; and there were *moral* types of his person, as Adam, Abel, and Noah, which represented him in sundry things; but no one before Melchisedec was an instituted personal type of Christ. And that which God taught herein was, that the foundation of all that the Lord Christ had to do in and for the church was laid in his *priestly office*, whereby he made atonement and reconciliation for sin. Every thing else he doth is built on that supposition.

§24. From the name or title of God—the most high God—as it is descriptive of his majesty and authority, we may *observe*:

1. To preserve a due reverence of God in our minds and words, we should think of, and use with reverence those *holy titles* whereby he is described in the scriptures. So are we taught to fear that dreadful and glorious name, “the Lord thy God,” Deut. xxviii, 58; Isa. xxx, 15, chap. lvii, 15. Let us always sanctify him in our hearts and words.

2. It is good at all times to fix our faith on *that* in God, which is meet to encourage our obedience and dependance upon him in our present circumstances,

The believers in those days did, in a very particular manner, confess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth, Heb. xi, 18. They eyed God in an especial manner as the "most high God;" as he that was over all, and had the disposal of all things in his own sovereign power.

3. In particular, it is a matter of inestimable satisfaction that he whom we serve is the most high God, the sovereign possessor of heaven and earth. It is, in sense, the same with that appellation which God gave himself when he entered into covenant with Abraham, encouraging him thereby to adhere to him in faith and obedience, Gen. xvii, 1, "I am God Almighty."

4. Public profession in all ages is to be suited and pointed against the opposition that is made to the truth, or apostasy from it. The world being now generally fallen into idolatry and the worship of new earthly gods, believers made this the principal part of their profession, that they served the most high God, which ought to be observed on all like occasions.

§25. And we may farther observe, from what has been spoken, that,

1. All the commotions and concussions that are among the nations of the world shall be brought into a subserviency to the interest of Christ and his church. I intend those places where either the seat of the church is, or is to be. In Abraham's glorious victory, and royal munificence on the one hand, and in the sacerdotal blessing of Melchisedec on the other, there was such a representation of Christ in his principal offices as priest and king, as had never been made in the world before. It will be no otherwise with all those confusions and disorders that the world is filled with, although we can see nothing of the ways and means of their tendency to such an end.

2. There have been and are to be such seasons wherein God will dispose of nations and their interest according as the condition of the church requires; as he did here with all those nations, Isa. xliii, 3, 4; lx, 67.

3. The blessing of God may be expected on a just and lawful war. This war and victory of Abraham, which he received the blessing upon, is celebrated elsewhere, Isa. xli, 2, 3. And when these things occur—a lawful, necessary, immediate cause of war, as Abraham had for the rescue of Lot. A lawful call to the war, as Abraham had, being a sovereign prince and raising his army of his own people, and that to secure possessions of a country granted him by God himself: and—a subserviency to the glory of Christ and the good of the church—when these things, I say, occur, the presence of God in it, and the blessing of God upon it, may be justly expected.

§23. And we may see in Abraham receiving the blessing,

1. That he who hath received the greatest mercies and privileges in the world, may yet need their ministerial confirmation. Abraham had before received the blessing from the mouth of God himself; and it was no doubt a confirmation of his faith, to be now blessed again in the name of God by Melchisedec. Bless God for the ministry, for the word and sacraments; ordinarily our faith would not be kept up without them.

2. In the blessing of Abraham by Melchisedec all believers are virtually blessed by Jesus Christ. Melchisedec was a type of Christ, as our apostle declares. And Abraham in all these things represented all his posterity according to the faith. There is therefore more than a *bare story* in this matter; a *blessing* is in

it conveyed to all believers by way of an ordinance for ever.

3. It is God's institution that makes all our administrations effectual. So did sacerdotal benedictions become authoritative and efficacious.

4. Whatsoever we receive signally from God in a way of mercy, we ought to return a portion of it to him in a way of duty. It is a great sign that a man hath not engaged God in the getting of any thing, when he will not dedicate to him any portion of what is gotten.

5. That the Lord Jesus Christ is the only king of righteousness and peace to the church. See Isa. xxxii, 1, 21; chap. ix, 6. He is not only a righteous and peaceable King, as were his types Melchisedec and Solomon, but he is the author, cause, procurer, and dispenser of righteousness and peace to the church. So it is declared: Jer. xxiii, 5, 6, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." He is righteous and reigneth righteously, but this is not all, he is "the Lord our RIGHTEOUSNESS."

§27. And we may observe, moreover,

1. That the church never did, in any age, nor ever shall, want that instruction by divine revelation which is needful to its edification in faith and obedience.

2. It is a great honor to serve in the church, for the use and service of future generations. This was the honor of Melchisedec, that he was employed in a service, the true use and advantage of which was not given to the church until many generations after.

3. The scripture is so absolutely the rule, measure, and boundary of our faith and knowledge in *spiritual things*, as that which it *conceals* is instructive, as well as what it expresseth.

§28. The *doctrinal observations* that may be taken from these verses are,

1. When any were of old designed to be types of Christ, there was a necessity that things more excellent and glorious should be spoken or intimated of them, than did properly belong to them. So many things are here observed of Melchisedec which were not properly and literally fulfilled in him.

All that might be spoken so as to have any probable application in any sense to things and persons typically, coming short of what was to be fulfilled in Christ, the Holy Ghost, in his infinite wisdom, supplied that defect by ordering the account which he gives of them so as more might be learned from them than could be expressed. And where the glory of his person, as vested with his office, could not be represented by positive applications, it is done by a mystical silence, as in this story of Melchisedec.

3. That Christ, abiding a “priest for ever,” hath no more a *vicar* or successor, or substitute in his office, or any *deriving a real priesthood* from him, than had Melchisedec.

4. The whole mystery of divine wisdom, effecting all inconceivable perfections, centered in the person of Christ, to make him a meet, glorious, and most excellent priest unto God, in behalf of the church.

VERSES 4, 5.

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi; who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham.

§1. The connexion and design of the passage. §2—5. (I.) The exposition of the words. §6. (II.) Observations. It will be of no advantage to propose the most important gospel truths, if those to whom they are proposed do not diligently inquire into them. §7. Other observations. §8. Observations on ministerial supports. §9. It is God's prerogative to give pre-eminence in the church among those who are otherwise equal.

§1. **T**HESE verses proceed to the application of what was before discoursed. For having proved that Christ, the promised Messiah, was to be a priest after the order of Melchisedec, from Psalm cx, and given a description both of his person and office, from the historical narration of them as laid down by Moses, he makes application of the whole to his present purpose. And from the consideration of sundry particulars in his description, confirms in general the argument which he had in hand. For that which he principally designeth to prove, is, that a more excellent priesthood than that of Aaron being introduced according to the purpose and promise of God, it followed necessarily, that *that* priesthood, with all the worship, rites, and ceremonies which belonged to it, was to cease, and be taken out of the way.

§2. (I.) "Consider then how great this man was." The word here used (*deuveille*) signifies *diligently to behold*, contemplate, or look into, the things proposed to us. He had before warned them, that what he had to discourse on this subject was difficult, "hard to be

understood," but withal he adds what was their *duty* in that respect; which was in the first place, that they would heedfully and *diligently look into them*. (Πηλινος *hoc, quantus iste erat*;) "*how great this man was.*" The word respects *greatness* and *excellency* in any kind; it here regards alone his *dignity* with respect to his office, and nearness to God on that account; and it were well that we were all really convinced, that all *true greatness* consists in the favor of God, and our nearness to him, on account of our relation to Jesus Christ; which is *general*, abiding, yea, *eternal*.

§9. "Unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils." The conjunction (*καί*) is emphatical; and although in the original it is joined with (*δεκατην*) *the tenth*, yet in construction it is to be understood with *Abraham*. Not unto whom Abraham gave *even the tenth*; but, unto whom *even Abraham* gave the tenth, as it is in our translation. He who first received the promise, and whom they esteemed next to God himself. And their posterity do now place him in heaven above the angels, hardly allowing that the Messiah himself should be exalted above him. Hence it is that our apostle expresseth it so emphatically, "*even Abraham*;" (ο Πατριάρχης) *the Patriarch*, denotes a father, that is, a prince or ruler of a family; a *ruling father*. Wherefore, if any one were *greater* than Abraham in his own time, it must be acknowledged it was on account of some privilege superior to all that ever that whole nation, as descendants from Abraham, were made partakers of. (*Εδωκε*) *he gave*; yet not arbitrarily, but in the way of a *necessary duty*; not as a mere honorary respect, but as a *religious office*. (*Δεκατην*, i. e. *μεριδα*, or, *מַעֲשֵׂה*) *the fifth portion*, delivering it up to his use and disposal, as the priest of the most high God. And this tenth

was τὴν ἀποβίβιν) of the *spoils of war*; as the apostle interprets the passage in Moses. A part of the compound word (σίβ,) denotes *acerus*, an *heap of corn*, or any useful thing; and the whole word (ἀποβίβιν) is the *top of the heap*, the best of it, from whence the first fruits were taken for sacred service. And because it was the custom of all nations to dedicate or devote some portion of what they got in *war* for religious services, the word itself came to signify the *spoils of war*.

§4. "And verily, &c." There is in these words an illustration and confirmation of the present argument, proving the preference of Melchisedec above Abraham, from his giving the tithe or tenth of all to him, and consequently receiving the *blessing* from him. And this was taken from what was determined in the law, and acknowledged among the Hebrews, that the priests who received tithes by the law were *superior* in dignity and honor to the people from whom they received them. Yet this was only *declared* in the law, for the *foundation* of it was in the *light of nature*, as the apostle expressly intimates in the instance of *benediction*, as verse 7, (καὶ οἱ μὲν) and *verily*; as if he had said, With regard to this matter of tithing, and what may thence justly be inferred, as to dignity and pre-eminence, you may consider how it was under the law, and there you will find what I proposed to you directly confirmed. It is a great advantage to press them with whom we have to do from their *own principles*. "The sons of Levi who receive the office of priesthood." It was the *priests directly* whom he intended, or the sons of Aaron; and he might have expressed it, "the priests according to the law." But he varieth his expression, because *all the Levites* did receive tithes by the law, yea, tithes in the first place

were paid to them in common. But because their dignity among the people was *less conspicuous* than that of the priests; and the design of the apostle is not merely to argue from the *giving of tithes* to any, but the giving of them to them *as priests*, as Abraham gave tithes of all to Melchisedec, as "priest of the high God," he thus expresseth it, "the sons of Levi, *who receive the office of the priesthood*." Not all the posterity of Abraham, but only those of Levi, were set apart to receive tithes; and not all the posterity of Levi, but only the family of Aaron received the priesthood. For every man to be contented with his station in which God hath fixed him by rule and providence, is his safety and honor. "Have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law." They had a *command* "to take tithes," and they were to do it *according to the law*; the one was their warranty, and the other their rule; for so are the commandments and the law here to be distinguished. God did first take the tithe to be his *peculiar portion*, and thereby it was alienated from the people, so that they had no property in it; "And all the tithe of the land is the Lord's," Lev. xxvii, 30. Hence those that withheld their tithes are said to *rob God*, Mal. iii, 8.

§5. The privilege of the priests in taking the tenth of all, is amplified by the consideration of the persons of whom they took them: now these were not strangers or foreigners, but *their own brethren*; who were partakers of the same original privilege with themselves, which did not exempt them from the duty of paying tithes of all. Took tithes of their brethren, "though they came out of the loins of Abraham." Abraham first received the promises, and was an equal common spring of privileges to his *whole posterity*. The priests were not more children of Abraham than the people

were; therefore being so, and thereby interested in all the privileges of Abraham, or the church of believers, it is manifest how great the honor and pre-eminence of the priests were, in that they took tithes of them all. And this the apostle declares to strengthen his argument for the greatness and excellency of Melchisedec, in that he received tithes from Abraham himself.

§8. (II.) *Obs.* It will be fruitless and to no advantage to propose or declare the most important truths of the gospel, if those to whom they are proposed do not diligently inquire into them. "Consider then how great this man was." If men think they have nothing to do, but as it were to give the hearing to such an endeavor to carry them to perfection, they will lose all the advantage of their ministry. If upon the proposal of sacred truths that appear hard to be understood, they begin to think that this belongs not to *them*, it is for *others*, who are more exercised than they; it is not likely they should ever endeavor to apprehend them aright. And this very frame keeps many in a low form of knowledge all their days; possibly also this neglect is increased in many, by the spreading of a late foolish apprehension, that we are, upon the matter, to look after nothing but the doctrines and precepts of *morality* in the scripture; but as for the more spiritual mysteries of grace, we are not concerned in them. Where this principle is once imbibed, men will rest and satisfy themselves in the most *profound ignorance*; and not only so, but despise all such as endeavor to be wiser than themselves.

Again: If the light be not *pleasant* to us, as well as *useful*, we shall not value it, nor seek after it. When such mysterious truths as that here insisted upon by our apostle, are proposed to men, if they have no de-

light in such things, they will never be at the cost and pains of inquiring into them with necessary diligence.

§7. We proceed to other observations:

1. The sovereign will, pleasure, and grace of God alone put a difference among men, especially in the church. He makes men great or small, high or low, eminent or obscure, as it seemeth good to him. "He raiseth up the poor from the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes, and to make him inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them," 1 Sam. ii, 8. Whence was it that twelve poor fishermen were made apostles to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and becoming "princes in all nations?" Who made the most glorious apostle, of the first and fiercest persecutor? Was it not He who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and is gracious to whom he will be gracious?

2. Opportunities for duty, which render it beautiful, ought diligently to be embraced. So did Abraham: hence the performance of this duty became so renowned and useful. It is season that gives every thing its beauty; and an omission of duties in their seasons, or tergiversations under them, are evidences of an heart much under the power of corrupt lusts or unbelief.

3. When the instituted use of consecrated things ceaseth, the things themselves cease to be sacred, or of any peculiar esteem. For what became of all these dedicated things after the death of Melchisedee? They were no more sacred, the actual administration of his typical priesthood ceasing.

§8. We may farther observe the following things:

1. Rule, institution, and command, without regard to ~~un~~required humility, or pleas of greater zeal and self-denial, unless in evident and cogent circumstances, are the best preservatives of order and duty in the church. Neither the people's pretence of *poverty*, nor the minister's pretence of *humility*, will regulate this matter as it ought to be. But as it is the people's duty to provide for them, wherein they exercise grace and obedience towards Jesus Christ; so it is the minister's duty cheerfully to receive what is their due by the appointment of Christ, for they have a *command* so to do.

2. As it is the duty of those who are employed in sacred ministrations to receive what the Lord Christ hath appointed for their support, and in the way of his appointment; so it is their duty likewise without trouble, sollicitousness, or complaint to *acquiesce* therein. So was it with the priests of old, they were to receive their portion, and to *acquiesce* in their portion; the neglect of which duty was the sin of the sons of Eli. We take it for granted that the *way* of ministerial maintenance is changed under the New Testament; but that the *law of maintenance* is taken away, is the highest folly to imagine, it being so expressly asserted by our Savior himself and his apostles, Luke x, 7; 1 Cor. ix. But here it is thought lies the disadvantage; that whereas the priests under the Old Testament had a *certain portion* which was *legally* due to them, and they might demand it as their own, it is now referred to the *voluntary contribution* of them who have the benefit of their labor. But he is unworthy the name of a minister of the gospel, who is not satisfied with what our Lord hath ordained in every kind. This way is the most *honorable way*, and that which casts the greatest respect upon them. Even the princes

and rulers of the world have their revenue and support from the substance of the people. Now I would only ask, whether it would be more *honorable* that the people should willingly and of *their own accord* bring in their contribution, than merely pay under the *compulsion* of a law; the latter possibly may secure the *revenue* of ministers, but it will not increase their *honor*. For, however men may please themselves with the outward appearances of things, *true honor* consists in that respect and reverence which others pay them in their minds and hearts. Now when this is such, and that from a regard of *duty*, that men will freely contribute to their support, I know no more honorable subsistence in the world. What! will some say, to depend on the wills and love of the people; there is nothing more base and unworthy. Yea, but what if all the *honor* of Jesus Christ himself hath, or accepts from his people, proceeds from their *wills and affections*? Our apostle tells us that our Lord hath ordained, that those who preach the gospel shall live on the gospel; and all obedience to his ordinances and institutions must be *voluntary*. If they will not do so, their best way is to leave *his service*, and take up with that which is—more honorable! The truth is, God hath established *mutual duty* to be the rule and measure of all things between ministers and people. I do not condemn any *provision* that is made by good and righteous laws among men for this purpose, provided it be such as is accommodated to the furtherance of the work itself. Yea, if in this degeneracy of Christianity under which we suffer, any shall, out of love and obedience to the gospel, set apart any portion of their estates, and settle it to the service of the church in the maintenance of the ministry, it is a *good work*, which, if done in faith, will be divinely accepted. Let

those who are *true disciples* know, that it is greatly incumbent upon them to roll away that reproach which is cast upon the institutions of Christ, by the miscarriages of the generality of Christians. Our Lord hath ordained, that those who are his disciples should, in obedience to his commands, supply with *temporals* those by whom *spirituals* are dispensed to them. If this be not done, a *reproach* is cast upon his institutions as insufficient to the end for which they were designed. If it be said, that whatever men pretend, yet it is impossible to work the people to a *due discharge of their duty* in this matter; I grant it, whilst that is only, or even *principally* intended. But if men would not consider *themselves* in the *first* place, but really endeavor the recovery of their people to faith, love, obedience, and holiness, and that by their own example as well as teaching, it may well be hoped that this duty would revive again in the *company of others*; for it is certain it will never stand *alone*.

§9. *Obs.* From the privilege of the priests above their brethren we may learn, that it is God's prerogative to give dignity and pre-eminence in the church among those who are otherwise equal, which is to be acquiesced in. Our common vocation by the word states us all equally in the same privilege, as all the children of Abraham were in that respect in the same condition; but in this common state, God makes by his sovereign prerogative, a three-fold difference among believers; as to *grace*, as to *gifts*, and as to *office*.

(1.) As to *grace*. Although all true believers have the same grace in *kind*, yet some much excel others in the *degrees* and exercise of it. As one *star differeth* from another, that is, *excelleth* another, in glory; so here one saint *excelleth* another in grace. And he is gracious to whom he will be gracious; so when, and

how, and in what measure he pleaseth. Some shall have grace *sooner* than others, and some that which is *more eminent* than others; only he that hath *least* shall have no lack, as to the making of him meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; and he that hath *most*, hath no more than he shall find need of, and abundant exercise for. But so it is; some, God will have as pillars in his house, and some are but as bruised reeds. There is no man in the world that hath so little grace, but he hath more than he ever deserved; and none hath so much, as that any drachm of it is of his own earning; and as he who hath nothing but what he hath freely received, hath nothing to boast of; so he who hath that which he never deserved, hath no reason to complain: it is the pleasure of God it should be so: and indeed there is a *great deal of glory* in the least degree of true grace; yes, however small it may be in comparison of higher attainments, there is more glory in it than all things under the sun besides. No man hath so little grace, who hath any, as that he is ever able to set a sufficient price upon it, or to be thankful enough for it. Those who are *strong*, who have much grace, ought not to boast or be lifted up; for, as we observed before, they have nothing but what they have freely received, and it is the nature of all true grace to exclude all boasting. He that, by comparing himself with others, finds any other issue in his thoughts, but either to admire sovereign grace, or to judge himself beneath them, is either in an *ill condition*, or at least in an *ill frame*. There is no one hath so much grace, as not every moment to need supplies of more; and he who, like Peter, trusteth to that wherein he is *above* others, will one way or other be brought down *beneath them all*.

(2.) As to *spiritual gifts*. Among those who are called, the Spirit divideth to every one even as he will. To one he giveth *five talents*, to another *two*, and to a third but *one*. And this sovereign diversity is visible in all churches; and as this tends in itself to their beauty and edification, so there may be an abuse of it to their disadvantage. For besides those disorders which the apostle declares to have ensued, particularly in the church of Corinth, upon the undue use and exercise of spiritual gifts, there are sundry evils which may befall particular persons by reason of them, if their original and end be not duly attended to. Hence have proceeded self-conceit, despising of others, emulations and strifes. Some who have received them in the lowest degree may be apt, perhaps, to despond, and *refuse to trade* with what they have, because their *stock* is inferior to their neighbors. But what is this to us; may not God do what he will with his own? If God will have some of the sons of Abraham to *pay* tithes, and some to *receive* them, is there any ground of complaint? To him that hath the most eminent gifts, God hath given of his own, and not of ours; he hath taken nothing from us to endue him with, but supplied him out of his own stores. Whoever, therefore, is unduly *exalted* with them, or *envies* because of them, he *despise*th the *prerogative of God*, and contends with him that is mighty.

(3.) God distinguisheth persons with respect to *office*. He *makes*, and so *accounts*, whom he will *faithful*, and puts them into the ministry. This of old, Korah repined against, and there are not a few who free themselves from envy at the ministry by endeavoring to bring it down into contempt; but the office is honorable, and so are they by whom it is discharged in a due manner; and it is the prerogative of God to

call to it whom he pleaseth. Finally observe, That no privilege can exempt persons from subjection to any of God's institutions, "Though they were of the loins of Abraham."

VERSES 6—10.

But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better; and here men that did receive tithes, but there he receiveth them of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi, also who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

§ 1. The scope and argument of the words. §2—6. (I.) Exposition of their several parts. §7. (II.) Observations. §8. It is a great mercy and privilege, when God will make use of any in blessing others with spiritual mercies: parental and ministerial blessings. §9. God is pleased in the outward administration of his worship, to make use of poor, frail, dying men. §10. Additional observations.

§1. **I**N these five verses the apostle pursues and concludes that part of his argument from the consideration of Melchisedec, which concerned the *greatness and glory* of him who was represented by him, and his pre-eminence above the Levitical priests; for if Melchisedec, who was but a *type*, was in his own person in so many instances more excellent than they, how much more must Christ be esteemed to be above them who was represented by him; for he whom another is appointed to represent, must be more glorious than he by whom he is represented. The apostle concludes in these verses, and thence proceeds to another great inference and deduction from what he had taught concerning this Melchisedec—That the Levitical priesthood must necessarily cease upon the introduction of that better priesthood which was fore-signified by that of Melchisedec.

§2. (I.) (Μη γενεαλογημενος) "He whose descent is not counted." The *Syriac* version, "*He who is not written in their genealogies*;" properly enough, for the apostle speaks of the genealogies recorded in the book of Genesis, wherein there is none of Melchisedec; and it is the writing by divine inspiration that his argument is founded on. *Note.* It is good ordinarily to be, as it were, *genealogized* into the ministry by established rule; but God can, by virtue of his own sovereignty grant this privilege to whom he pleaseth: and let not any imagine that such a supposition must needs immediately open a door to confusion, for there are *invariable rules* to try men and their ministry at all times, whether they are sent of God or no. The doctrine they teach, the ends they promote, the lives they lead, the circumstances of the times, &c. will sufficiently manifest whence such teachers are.

"Received tithes of Abraham." The Levitical priests received tithes of those who come out of the loins of Abraham which was an evidence of their dignity by God's appointment; but Melchisedec received them of Abraham himself, which evidently declares his superiority to both; and the apostle, by insisting on these things so particularly, shews how difficult a matter it is to dispossess the minds of men of those things which they have long trusted to and boasted of.

"And blessed him that had the promises." This he singles out as the greatest privilege and honor of Abraham, as it was indeed the foundation of all his other mercies. The nature of this promise, with the solemn manner of giving it to Abraham, and the benefits included in it, he had at large declared before, chap. iv, ver. 13—16. Hereby Abraham became the father of the faithful, the heir of the world, and the friend of

God; so that it exceedingly illustrates the greatness of Melchisedec, in that *this Abraham* paid tithes to him.

But it may yet be said, that Abraham had not received the promises then, when he was blessed of Melchisedec; we reply, he had before received the *same promise*, for the substance of it, which was afterwards more solemnly confirmed to him, on the trial of his faith in offering his only son, Gen. xii, 2, 3; chap. xiii, 15, 16. He was then actually instated in a right to all that farther confirmation of the promises which he received on various occasions; and what followed added not to the *dignity of his person*, but served only to the confirmation of his faith. So Melchisedec “blessed him who had the promises.”

§3. But what if Abraham was thus *blessed* of Melchisedec, doth this prove that he was *less* than he by whom he was blessed? Yes, saith the apostle, and that by virtue of an unquestionable general rule; “And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.” The words (το ελαττον and το κρειττονος) *less* and *greater*, are in the *neuter* gender, and so rendered in most translations; (*Illud quod minus est, &c.*) The *Syriac* reduces them to the *masculine*; “He who is the less is blessed of him who is greater,” or *more excellent*, which is the true sense of the place. The words prevent an implied objection: (χωρις πασης ανηλογιας) *without*, beyond, above, *all reasonable contradiction*, as that which is evident in the light of nature. There are some truths which have such an evidence in themselves, and such a suitableness to the principles of reason and the light of nature, that no color of opposition can be made to them. And if any from strong prejudices persist in opposing them, they are not to be contended with, but neglected. What is here intimated is, that there are some principles of truth so secur-

ed in their own evidence and light, as that being unquestionable in themselves, they may be used and improved as *concessions*, whereon other less evident truths, may be confirmed and established. The due consideration hereof is of *great use* in the method of teaching, or in the vindication of truth. In all teaching especially in matters that are *controverted*, it is of great advantage to fix upon some *unquestionable principles*, whence those which are less evident, or are more opposed, may be deduced, or be otherwise influenced and confirmed. A neglect hereof makes popular discourses weak in their application; and those wherein men contend for the truth, infirm in their conclusions. Hence the apostle resolveth his present argument into such an *unquestionable principle*, as reason and common sense must admit of.

The proposition is, "That the less is blessed of the greater;" that is, he that is blessed, is *therein* less than the other, or beneath him in dignity. He treats only of *sacerdotal* benedictions, and, with respect to them, the rule is not only certainly true, but openly evident. But to illustrate the whole, and to shew how far the rule mentioned may be extended, we may reduce all sorts of blessings to *four heads*:

1. There is (*benedictio potestativa*) such a blessing as consists in an actual, *efficacious communication* of the matter of the blessing to the person blessed. Thus God alone can bless absolutely.

2. There is (*benedictio autoritativa*) a kind of blessing by which men, in the name, that is, by the appointment and warranty of God, *declare* any to be *blessed*; pronouncing the blessings to them, whereof they shall be made partakers; and the blessing of Melchisedec in this place seems to have a mixture in it of *both* these; for, as it is plain that he blessed Abraham

by virtue of his sacerdotal office, which our apostle principally considereth, so I make no question, but he was peculiarly actuated by immediate inspiration from God, in what he did. And in this sort of blessing the apostolical maxim maintains its evidence in the light of nature.

§4. (Ὡς μὲν—ἐκεῖ δὲ) “*Here verily—but there.*” These words, “*here*” and “*there*” express the several different states under consideration. *Here*, in the case of the *Levitical priesthood*; *there* in the case of *Melchisedec*, Gen. xiv.

The foundation of the comparison, that whereon both agreed, is in this, that they *received tithes*. It is *expressed* of the one sort only, the *Levitical priests*, but is understood of the other also, as supplied in our translation. The opposition and difference lie in the qualification and properties of them by whom they are received. Those on the one side were (ἀποθνήσκοντες ἄνθρωποι, *homines qui moriuntur*; or, *homines morientes*) “*men that die*,” that is, men subject to death, who lived and died in the discharge of their office, according to the common laws of morality. They had both “*beginning of days and end of life.*”

In opposition to this state of the *Levitical priests*, it is affirmed that (ἐκεῖ) *there*, in the case of *Melchisedec*, (μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῇ) “*it is witnessed that he liveth.*” What the scripture conceals of *Melchisedec* is to instruct us in the mystery of his person and ministry, as types of Christ. Hence the silence of scripture, *in what it useth to express*, must, in this case, be interpreted as a testimony to the contrary. So it *witnessed* of him, that he was without father, without mother, without descent, and that it *mentioneth none* of them. And whereas he had neither beginning of days nor end of life recorded in the scriptures, it is thereby witnessed,

that, as to his typical consideration he liveth; for there are no bounds or periods fixed to his priesthood, nor did it expire by the bringing in that of Levi, as that did by the introduction of Christ. What is represented in the type, but is really, subjectively, and properly found only in the antitype, may be affirmed of the type as such. So it is in all sacramental institutions; as the paschal lamb was called expressly God's *pass-over*, Exod. xii, 11, when it was only a pledge and token thereof; as under the New Testament, the bread and wine in the sacred supper, are called, "the body and blood of Christ," which they do but represent. Thus it is true really and absolutely of our Lord Jesus Christ, that "he liveth for ever;" that he is a "priest for ever:" which the apostle much insisteth on afterwards. This eternity, or *ever living* of Jesus Christ, was represented in Melchisedec, in that it is not said any where in the scripture that he died; it is witnessed, therefore, that he liveth, because he whom he represents doth really so; and his own death is not mentioned, *on purpose* that he might so represent him. And the apostle's argument to the dignity and pre-eminence of Melchisedec above the Levitical priests in this instance, is of an unquestionable evidence. For, consider Melchisedec, not in his *natural* being and existence, which belongs not to this mystery, but in his *scripture* being and existence, and he is immortal, always living, wherein he is more excellent than those who were always obnoxious to death in the exercise of their office.

§5. (Ὡς εἶπεν ἐκείν) "As I may so say." The instance being new, and he arguing from what was *virtual* only, as if it had been *actual*, he gave his assertion this qualification. Or, rather, as I incline to judge, he useth this phrase for as much as, *ut verba*

dicam, "to sum up the whole in a word," to put an issue to this dispute between the Levitical priesthood and that of Melchisedec; I say, that not only Abraham, but even Levi himself, was *tithed* by him. By "Levi" he intendeth his posterity, or the whole tribe proceeding from him, so far as they were interested in the priesthood; for Levi himself never received tithes of any, the priesthood being erected in his family long after his death, in the person of his great grandchild Aaron. (Δεδεναιωται δια Αβρααμ) "*He was tithed, or paid tithes, in Abraham,*" or *through* him, and *by* him, as the word denotes. When Abraham himself gave tithes to Melchisedec, he did it not in his own name only, but in the name of himself and his whole posterity.

"For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him." Abraham was now called of God, and separated to his service, so as to be the foundation of a new church in the world; and there is a *relation* to such an original stock in all the branches beyond what they have to any other intermediate progenitors. He had now received the promise that "God would be a God to him and his seed after him;" whereby all his seed were taken into covenant with him. What God said and did to Abraham, he said and did to all his seed in him. The promises were theirs, and the inheritance theirs; and, on the other hand, Abraham acted as a *public person* in the name of his posterity. Hence when the people came actually to possess the land, they held it always on this condition, that the tenths of all should be *given to God*; and this Abraham, in his taking *seisin* of it *for them*, *paid in their name*: so truly and virtually was Levi himself tithed in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him. Wherefore it was not merely Levi

being in the loins of Abraham with respect to *natural* generation, whence he is said to be tithed in him, but his being *federally* in him. And thus our apostle's reasoning being duly inquired into, we find is resolved into the firm principles of reason and religion.

§6. It has been questioned, whether Christ himself may not as well as Levi be said to pay tithes in Abraham as being in his loins? No; for Christ was never in Abraham *as a federate*, one taken in covenant with him, and so represented by him, as Levi was. Abraham was taken into covenant with Christ, as the surety and mediator of the new covenant. Hereon he was the *representative* of Abraham and all believers, and what he did is imputed to them; but he was never taken into covenant with Abraham, nor was capable of it.

And this makes way for the solution of another general question, How one may be said to do any, which shall be reckoned to him as his own act? Which is no otherwise than by virtue of a *covenant*. Abraham was taken into a *new administration* of the covenant, with new promises and seals; but he neither was, nor could be, the head and representative of that *covenant itself* whereinto he was taken, otherwise than *typically*. Hence his *moral good* or *evil* could not be reckoned to his posterity in covenant. But yet he was made the *head* and spring of the *administration* of its outward privileges. Wherefore, seeing what he did to Melchisedec belonged to the *administration* of the covenant committed to him, Levi is rightly said to have done it *in him* also: and these things do mutually illustrate one another. But to deny (as Schlictingius does in his comment on this place) that we *were all in Adam*, as the head of the first covenant, that we *sinned in him*, and that any *sin can be imputed*, is not

to *dispute* with us, but expressly to *contradict* the Holy Ghost.

§7. (II.) From the preceding exposition we may make the following *observations*:

1. We can be made partakers of no such grace, mercy, or privilege in this world, but that God can, when he pleaseth, make an *addition* to it. He who had received the promises was afterwards blessed. Wherefore, as it is required of us to be thankful for what we have, or to walk worthy of the grace we have received, yet we may live in constant expectation of more from him; and this inestimable privilege should be the great comfort and relief of our souls.

2. It is the blessing of Christ, typified by Melchisedec, that makes promises and mercies effectual to us. He is himself the great subject of the promises, and the whole *blessing* of them cometh from him alone; all without him is under the curse. In him, from him, and by him alone, are all blessings to be obtained.

3. Free and sovereign grace is the only foundation of all privileges. All that is spoken of the *dignity* of Abraham is resolved into this, that "he received the promises."

§8. *Obs.* It is a great mercy and privilege when God will make use of any in blessing others with spiritual mercies. It is God alone who originally and efficiently can confer a blessing on any; yet he generally maketh use of others, in various degrees of usefulness, instrumentally to communicate them: so *parents* bless their children and household, and *ministers* the church.

First; PARENTS bless their children in the name of the Lord several ways; particularly, by *endeavoring to instate them* in their own covenant interest; by communicating to them the privilege of the *initial seal* of

the covenant, as a sign and pledge of their being blessed of the Lord, by pleading the *promise* of the covenant in their behalf; and by carefully *instructing* them in its mercies and duties. Wherefore, although this power of blessing be founded in the law of nature, and in all nations something hath been observed that looks towards it, yet it is by *faith* alone that any parents are able to bless their children in a due manner. As to *parental instruction*, if parents did truly consider how they stand in the stead of God in that matter, they would probably be more diligent and conscientious in the discharge of their duty than they are; and if children could but understand that parental instruction is an instituted means of God's blessing them with the principal blessing, they would with more diligence and reverence apply themselves to the reception of it than is usual among men. Again: parents bless their children by their *example*. Let parents take what pains they please in teaching and instructing their families, unless their *personal walk* be holy, and their lives fruitful, they will do more for their destruction than their edification. To pray, to read, to catechise, to instruct, and then (by a hideous inconsistency) to lead a life of frowardness, passion, worldly mindedness, vain communication, and the like, is to pull down with the one hand what we set up with the other; or, rather, with both our hands to pull down our own houses. Finally: parents bless their children by *prayer* for them. And I do not understand how those, who do not believe the special interest of their children in the covenant of grace, (as externally administered) can bless them in the name of the Lord in a due manner. These are some few heads of parental benedictions.

Secondly; MINISTERS bless the church, as a part of their ministerial duty. Particularly, by the right and orderly celebration of all holy *ordinances* of worship; and the *preaching* of the word; and particularly by the ministerial *applications* of the word to the consciences of men. How they bless the church by *prayer* and *example*, may be understood from what hath been spoken concerning parents. The *authority* that is in these ministerial acts depends on God's institution, which discriminates them from, and exalts them above the common order of mutual charitative benedictions. Those who are thus appointed to bless others in the name of God, and are thereby exalted into a certain pre-eminence above them, ought to be accordingly regarded by all that are so blessed. In short; it is well if Christians rightly consider what their duty is to them who are appointed as a means to communicate all spiritual blessings to them; and let those who are so appointed take heed lest, by their miscarriage, they prove not a *curse* to them whom they ought to bless. For if this is the case, when they are *negligent* in the performance of these important duties; much more, if therewith they "put the *name of any false God*" upon them.

§2. *Obs.* In the outward administration of his worship, God is pleased to make use of poor, frail, dying men. "Our fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?" Zech. i, 5. Yea, oftentimes their bodily infirmities, outward condition, and manifold frailties are signalized above others. And God hath chosen to make use, on this great occasion, of *poor, infirm, frail, tempted, sinning, dying men*.

(1.) To make it evident that it is his *own power*, and nothing else, gives efficacy and success to all gospel administrations, 2 Cor. iv, 7, "We have this treasure

in *earthen vessels*, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." There is not a soul convinced, converted, or comforted by their word, but they may truly say of the effect wrought, as the apostles did of the miracle, Acts iii, 12. "Why look ye so on us, as though by our own power and holiness we made this man walk;" this blind man to see, that dead man to live. By the consideration of our meanness all may discern, that the *excellency of this power* is of God, and not of us. What the Jews spoke blasphemously of Christ upon the opening of the eyes of him who was born blind, may in a sense be *truly spoken* of any of us upon the opening of the eyes of them that were spiritually blind; "give God the praise, we know that this man is a sinner."

(2.) God hath so ordered things in wisdom and grace, that the administrators of holy things to others might have experience in themselves of their state and condition, so as to be moved with peculiar compassion, care, and zeal for them.

(3.) That the power of gospel grace and truth may be exemplified to the eyes of them to whom they are dispensed, in the person dispensing them according to God's appointment.

(4.) In particular, God maketh use of such persons, that their testimony to the truth of gospel grace and mercy may be complete and unquestionable. Death is the great *touchstone* of all things of this nature, as to their efficacy and sincerity. Many things will yield relief in *life*, and various refreshments, which, upon the approach of *death*, vanish into nothing. God therefore hath ordained, that all those who administer the gospel shall bring their own faith to that *last trial*; that so, giving a testimony to the sincerity and efficacy of what they have preached, in that they *commit the eter-*

not salvation of their own souls to them, (and what higher testimony can be given?) they may be encouragements to others to follow their examples, to imitate their faith, and pursue their course to the end. But on the other hand, the *evil examples* of any ministers in life and death are unspeakably pernicious.

§10. Here the following observations may be added:

1. The life of the church depends on the everlasting life of Jesus Christ. It is said of Melchisedec, *as a type* of him, "it is witnessed that he liveth." Christ doth so *really* and forever; and hereon, under the failings, infirmities, and death of all other administrators, depend the preservation, life, continuance, and salvation of the church.

2. It is of great concernment to us, what covenant we belong to, as being esteemed to do therein what is done by our representatives in our name. Before we make our own personal voluntary choice, we are by the law of our natures, and of the covenant itself, inclosed in the same condition with our progenitors, as to their covenant state. And thence it is that in the severest temporal judgments, children not guilty of the actual transgressions of their parents, do yet oftentimes partake of the punishments they have deserved, being esteemed *in some manner* to have done what they did; *viz.* so far as they were included in the same covenant with them. And many blessings on the other hand, are they partakers of, who are included in the covenant of those parents who are interested in the covenant of grace. For such parents (in this respect) succeed in the room of Abraham, every one of them. And what Abraham did, as to the *administration of the covenant*, intrusted with him, his posterity, whose representative he was therein, are said to have done *in him*, as Levi

in this place, and therefore had the seal of the covenant given to them in their infancy.

VERSE 11.

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what farther need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

§1. A summary view of the apostle's plan. §2. His design more particularly explained. §3. Perfection denied to the Levitical priesthood. §4. Wherein the perfection mentioned in the text consists. It is either, first, such as belongs to the church itself; or §5, 6. Secondly the worship of the gospel. §7, 8. The other parts of the words explained. §9—12. Observations.

§1. **I**N this verse, after so long a preparation and introduction, whereby he cleared his way from objections, and secured his future building, the apostle enters on his principal argument concerning the *priesthood* of Christ, and all the consequences of it with respect to righteousness, salvation, and the worship of God, which depend thereon. This being his main design, he would not engage in it before he had in every respect declared and vindicated the dignity and glory of the *person of Christ* as vested with his blessed offices. And, from hence to the didactical part of the epistle, he proceeds in a retrograde order to what he had before insisted on; for whereas he had first declared the glory of the *person* of Christ in his *kingly office*, chap. i; then his *prophetical*, chap. ii, 3; having now entered on his *sacerdotal*, he goes on to enlarge upon it; he then returns to his *prophetical*, and shuts up the whole with a renewed mention of his *kingly* power.

§2. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood." (Εἰ μὲν ἔν) *If therefore*; if things be as we have declared. He laid a peculiar scope and de-

sign in those things which he is now introducing. And that they might consider, how what he had to say was educed from what he had before proved, he introduceth it with those notes of inference. And to comprehend the apostle's design in them, we may observe,

1. That his reasoning in this case is built upon a supposition which the Hebrews could not deny, *viz.* that (τελειωσις) *perfection*, or consummation, is the *end* aimed at in the priesthood of the church. That priesthood which *perfects* the people in order to their acceptance with God, and future enjoyment of him, their present righteousness and future blessedness, is that which the church stands in need of, and without which it cannot rest. That priesthood which leaves men in an *imperfect* state, whatever use it may be of for a season, cannot be *perpetual*, to the exclusion of another; for if so, either God had not designed to consummate his people, or he must do it some other way than by a priesthood. The first is contradictory to the truth of God and all his promises; yea, would make all religion vain and ludicrous. That this should be done any other way than by a *priesthood*, the Hebrews did neither expect nor believe. For they knew full well that all the ways appointed by the law, to make atonement for sin, to attain righteousness and acceptance with God, depended on the priesthood and its various services. If, therefore, the apostle proves that *perfection* could not be attained by the Levitical priesthood, it necessarily follows, that there must be some *more excellent* priesthood yet to be produced. This therefore he undeniably evinceth. For,

2. Look to the Levitical priesthood in the days of David and Solomon. Then was that order in its height and at the best; then was the tabernacle first,

and afterwards the temple, in their greatest glory, and the worship of God performed with the greatest solemnity. The Hebrews would grant, that the priesthood of Levi could never rise to a higher pitch of glory, nor be more useful than it was in those days; yet, saith he, *even then* it did not *consummate* the church; which is demonstrated by the testimony of David himself, who prophesied that there was to be *another priest* "after the order of Melchisedec." For if the perfection of the church was all that God ever aimed at by a priesthood, and if that were attained, or even attainable, by the priesthood in David's time, to what end should another be promised to be raised up after *another order*? Wherefore,

3. The apostle obviates an objection that might be raised against the sense of that testimony. For it might be said, that, though after the institution of the Levitical priesthood there was yet mention of *another priest* to rise, it might be some *eminent person* of the same order, such as Joshua the son of Josedec, who was eminently serviceable in the house of God after the captivity, and was honored with eminent dignity, Zech. iii, 4—7, so that the defect supposed might be in the *persons* of the priests, and not in the *order* of the priesthood. This the apostle obviates by declaring that, if it had been so, he would have been *called, or spoken of*, as one of the order of Aaren. But whereas there were two orders of the priesthood, the *Melchisedician* and *Aaronical*, it is expressly said, that this other priest should be of the *former*, and not of the latter.

4. He hath yet a farther design, which is not only to prove the necessity of another priest and priesthood, but thereon also an *abrogation of the whole law of worship* under the Old Testament. Hence he here in-

traduceth the mention of the law, "for under it the people received the law," as that which was given at the same time with the priesthood, and had such a relation thereto, as that of necessity it must stand or fall with it. And this may suffice for a view of the scope of this verse, and the force of the argument. We shall now consider the particulars of it.

§3. "If therefore perfection were (*διὰ τῆς Λευϊτικῆς ἱερουργίας*) by the *Levitical* priesthood;" the apostle calls the priesthood of the law "*Levitical*," not only because Levi was their progenitor, the patriarch of their tribe, from whom they were genealogized; but also because he would comprise in his assertion not only the house of Aaron, to whom the right and exercise of the priesthood were confined, but he would also take into consideration the *whole Levitical service*, which was subservient to the priesthood, and without which it could not be discharged. That (*τελειωσις*) *perfection* was of this priesthood, is denied in a restrictive interrogation. If it had been so, "what farther need," &c. that is, it certainly *would have been otherwise* with respect to another priest, than as it is declared by the Holy Ghost.

§4. But our principal inquiry on this verse will be concerning this (*τελειωσις*) "*perfection*," and wherein it consists. Some men no sooner hear of the word "*perfection*" in scripture, but they presently dream of an *absolute sinless, inherent perfection of holiness*; which, if they are not utterly blinded and hardened, they cannot but know themselves to be far enough from. But this word hath no such meaning; it denotes no *internal holiness* at all, and therefore it cannot signify the *perfection* of it. Nor is any such perfection attainable in this life, as the scripture every where testifies. Wherefore the apostle had no need to prove that it

was not attainable by the *Levitical priesthood*, or to reflect upon it for that reason, seeing it was not attainable by *any other* way or means whatever. We must therefore diligently inquire into the true notion of it, which will guide the remaining interpretation of the words. And concerning it we may observe in general,

First, That it is the *effect*, or *end*, or necessary consequent of a priesthood. This supposition is the foundation of the whole apostolic argument. Now the priestly office and work may be considered two ways;—either, with respect to *God*, who is the first immediate *object* of all the proper acts of that office;—or, with respect to the *church*, which is the *subject* of all the fruits and benefits of its administration.

If we take it in the *first* way, then the *expiation of sin* is intended in this word; for this was the great act and duty of the priesthood towards God, *viz.* to make *atonement* for sin by sacrifice. And if we take the word in this sense, the apostle's assertion is most true; for *this perfection* was never attainable by the *Levitical priesthood*. It could expiate sin, or make atonement, only *typically*, by way of representation; but really and effectually, as to all the ends of spiritual reconciliation to God, and the pardon of sin, they could not; "for it was not possible," as our apostle observes, "that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin," chap. x, 4. But I do not know that this word is any where used in this sense, nor doth it here include that signification. And, *God* is the immediate object of that *sacerdotal energy* whereby sin is expiated; whereas it is the *church* that is here said to be "perfected;" so that expiation of sin cannot be intended thereby, though it be *supposed*. Besides, the apostle doth not here understand sacrifices only, by which

alone atonement was made, but all other administrations of the Levitical priesthood whatever.

Secondly, This "perfection," therefore, respects the church, which is the subject of all the benefits of the priesthood, and is *that perfect state of the church in this world*, which God from the beginning designed for it. He entered upon erecting it in the first promise, with respect to his worship, and the blessed condition of the church itself. With respect to this state, therefore, is that of the Old Testament said to be *weak and imperfect*, like that of a child under governors and tutors. Hence also it had a *yoke* imposed on it, causing fear and bondage; God having ordained better things for us, or the church under the New Testament, (ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν ἡλειωθῶσι, Heb. xi, 40,) "That they without us should not be *consummated*," or *made perfect* in their church state. The foundation of it was laid in that word of our Savior, wherewith he gave up the ghost, (τέτελεσται) John xix, 30, "It is *finished*," or completed; that is, all things belonging to that great sacrifice, whereby the church was to be perfected, were accomplished. And those who were thoroughly instructed in the privileges of this church-state, and had a sense of its benefits, are called (τέλειοι) *perfect*, 1 Cor. ii, 6.

Thirdly, This "perfection" may be considered two ways,

I. As to its *absolute completeness* in its final issue. This the apostle denies that he himself had as yet attained, Phil. iii, 12, "Not as though I had already attained," or (ελάβον) *received*; that is, the whole of what is purchased for me by Christ; (ἡ ἤδη τέλειωμαι) "or were already made perfect," which could not be without attaining the resurrection of the dead, ver. 11,

though the spirits of just men were (τελειωμένων, Heb. xii, 23;) *made perfect*.

§ It may be considered as to its initial state in this world; and the Lord Jesus Christ, as the sole procurer of this state is said to be (τελειώτης) *the consummator*, the perfecter, the "*finisher* of our faith," or religious worship, Heb. xii, 2; as having brought us into a state (τελειώσεως) *of perfection*.

§4. The chief thing before us therefore is, to inquire, what this state of perfection is? and to shew, that it could not be by the *Levitical priesthood*, or the law. Now the things that belong to it are of two sorts;—such as appertain to the souls and consciences of believers, that is, of the church; and, such as belong to the worship of God itself. For with respect to these two doth the apostle discourse, and assert a state of perfection, in opposition to the imperfect state of the church under the law.

First, Such as belong to the church. And there are *seven* things concurring to the constitution of this state:

1. *Righteousness*. The introduction of all perfection and weakness, that now subsists in the church was by sin. This made the law *weak*, Rom. viii, 3; and sinners to be *without strength*, Rom. v, 7. Wherefore the first step whereby perfection must be restored, is by righteousness. And Jehovah himself becomes "*our righteousness*" so that we may truly say, "*In the Lord (JEHOVAH) have we righteousness and strength.*" The apostle denies not perfection, and consequently righteousness to *persons under* the Levitical priesthood, but denies that they were made partakers of it *thereby*.

2. *Peace* is what next belongs to this gospel state of perfection. The kingdom of God is "*peace*," Rom. xiv, 17. To lay the foundation of this kingdom, Christ both "*made peace*" and "*preached peace*," Eph.

ii, 14, 17. It is "peace with God," which is the fruit of that righteousness before mentioned, Isa. xxxii, 17. As *enmity* and disorder entered into the whole world by the sin of man; so the foundation of universal *peace and order*, from which nothing is excluded but the serpent and his seed, must be laid in peace between God and man. Assured peace with God, delivering the souls of his disciples from all trouble and slavish fear, is what Christ peculiarly bequeathed to them. But by the Levitical priesthood; this peace could neither be *actually made*, nor *fully declared*. To this we may add, that peace between *Jews and Gentiles* belongs to this perfection, as well as peace among believers themselves.

3. *Spiritual light and knowledge*, with respect to the mysteries of divine grace. And this full revelation of the divine counsel, God reserved for the ministry of his Son; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. There was under the Levitical priesthood a *shadow* of good things to come, but no *perfect image* or complete delineation, chap. x, 1. Neither did the *prophets* themselves see into the depth of their own predictions, 1 Pet. i, 11, 12. Hence the believing church waited, with earnest expectation, "until the day should break, and the shadows flee away;" Cant. ii, 17, iv, 6; they longed for the breaking forth of that glorious light which the Son of God was to bring, attending in the mean time to the *word of prophecy*, which was to them as the light of a candle shining in a dark place:

4. *Liberty and boldness*, which believers have in their approaches to God. This is frequently mentioned as a special privilege of the gospel state, Eph. iii, 12; Heb. iii, 6, &c. and, on the contrary, the state under the Levitical priesthood is described as a state of *fear*

and bondage, that is, in a comparative sense, Rom. viii, 15; 2 Tim. i, 7, &c. And well it might, when we consider the dreadful manner of giving the law; the revealed sanction of it in the curse; the continual multiplication of their sacrifices, from time to time, whereby they were taught that by them all there was not an end made of sin, nor an everlasting righteousness introduced by them. "The law (saith our apostle, chap. x, 1) could never by those sacrifices which they offered, year by year continually, (τὰς προσερχομένων τελειώσει) *bring the worshippers to this perfection.*"

5. *A clear foresight into a blessed state of immortality and glory*, with unquestionable evidences and pledges of it. Death was originally threatened as the final issue of sin; and the evidence of it was received, under the Levitical priesthood, in the curse of the law. Wherefore, their apprehensions of deliverance, couched in the first promise, were but timid and cloudy. They could not look through the dark shades of death into life, immortality, and glory. But Christ dying as our high priest, entered into the devouring jaws of death as threatened in the curse, broke through its power, swallowed it up in victory, rose in triumph, and ascended into immortal glory. Hence, in the *resurrection of Christ*, the church had the first unquestionable evidence that death might be conquered. Thus hath he not only abolished death, but also brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 2 Tim. i, 10.

6. *Special joy*. For this kingdom of God is not only righteousness and peace, but also "*joy in the Holy Ghost.*" And though many of the saints of the Old Testament did greatly rejoice in the Lord, and had the joy of his salvation abiding with them; yet they had it not by virtue of the Levitical priesthood. It

was by the efficacious influence of the priesthood that was to be introduced, that is, of *our* everlasting one. This joy is unspeakable and full of glory, and may be thus described; that inexpressible satisfaction which is wrought in the minds of believers by the Holy Ghost, from an evidence of their interest in the love of God by Christ, with all its fruits present and to come, with a spiritual sense and experience of their worth and excellency. This gives the soul a quiet repose in all its trials, refreshment when it is weary, peace in trouble, and the highest satisfaction in the greatest hardships undergone for the name of Christ, Rom. v, 1—5.

7. *Glorying in the Lord.* This is the flowering and fruit of joy. One great design of the gospel is to *exclude boasting*, Rom. iii, 27. What then, is there *no glorying left us* in the profession of the gospel, no triumph, no exultation of spirit? Yes; there is a triumphant exultation of spirit from our preferring an interest in heavenly things above things present, so as to despise every thing contrary, however alluring or terrific.

§5. *Secondly*, This (τελειωσις) *perfection* respects the *worship of the gospel*; as well as the persons of the worshippers. God had designed for the church a more perfect state in point of worship than it was capable of under the Levitical priesthood. Nor indeed could any man reasonably think, or wisely judge, that he intended the institutions of the law to be the complete, ultimate worship he would require or appoint in this world. For,

1. They were in their nature *carnal*, as our apostle declares, ver. 16, and chap. ix, 10. The subject of them all, and the means of their celebration were carnal things, consisting much in *meats* and *drinks*, the blood of bulls and goats, &c. Certainly God, who is a spir-

it, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth, designed to introduce at one time or other, a worship more suited to his own nature, though the imposition of these things on the church, for a season was necessary.

2. By reason of their number, nature, and the manner of exacting them, they were made a *yoke*, which the people were never able to bear with any joy or satisfaction, Acts xv, 10; and this yoke consisted—partly in the *multitudes* of ceremonies and institutions that perplexed them, and gave them no rest. What way soever they turned themselves, one precept or other, positive or negative, “touch not, taste not, handle not,” was upon them; and partly in the *veil* that was on them, as to their use, meaning, and end: the worshippers could not see to the end of the things that were to be done away, nor apprehend fully the reason of what they did. And who can but pity the very woful condition of the *present Jews*, who can conceive of no greater blessedness than the restoration of this burdensome service. So true is what the apostle says, “Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart;” yea, blindness is on their minds, that they can see no beauty, but only in things “*carnal*;” and—like their forefathers, who preferred the bondage of Egypt, because of their flesh pots, before all the liberty and blessings of Canaan—they prefer their old bondage before the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

§6. In opposition to this imperfection, there is a gospel worship which hath such properties as are constitutive of that “perfection” intended in the text. By “*gospel worship*,” I understand the whole way and order of that solemn worship of God, which the Lord Jesus Christ hath commanded to be observed in his churches, with all the ordinances and institutions of it; and all the private worship of believers, in their whole

access to God. Here I shall only mention some few things wherein its excellency consists, in opposition to the defects of that under the law.

1. It is *spiritual*, in that it is suited to the *nature of God*, so that thereby he is glorified as God. For God is a spirit, and will be *worshipped in spirit*, which our Savior asserts to belong to the gospel state, in opposition to all the most glorious carnal ordinances and institutions of the law, John iv, 21—23. The old worship *in and by itself*, answered not to the nature of God, though commanded for a season, See Psal. i, ver. 8—14.

2. It is *easy and gentle*, in opposition to the burden and insupportable yoke of the old institutions. That so are all the commands of Christ to believers, the whole system of his precepts, whether for moral obedience or worship, himself declares: "Take my yoke upon you, saith he, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light," Matt. xi, 29, 30. So the apostle tells us, that his commandments are *not grievous*, 1 John v, 3. All the ordinances of evangelical worship are, as to their nature and appointed singular end, calculated to incite and strengthen grace in the worshippers; as also to exhibit and convey a sense of the love and favor of God to their souls. The outward *rites* of it are few, lightsome, easy to be observed, without scrupulous tormenting fears; not diverting the mind from that communion with God of which they are the means.

3. It is *instructive*; teaching with clearness and evidence what we are to know and learn. This was a great part of the imperfection of legal institutions, that they taught the things which they signified and represented but *obscurely*; and the mind of God in them was

not learned but with much difficulty, no small part of their obedience consisting in a renunciation of their understandings to the divine sovereignty, as to their use and end. But all the ordinances and institutions of the gospel clearly exhibit the things themselves to the faith of believers; they discern the reasons and grounds of their use and benefit. Whence our whole worship is called our *reasonable service*, Rom. xii, 1.

This is a brief declaration of that (*τελειωσις*) *perfection*, which the apostle denies to have been attainable by the *Levitical priesthood*; and the grounds of his denial he gives us in the remaining words of the text. But for the farther explanation of it, and application to his present purpose, he adds the respect that their priesthood had to the *law*, intending thereby to bring the *law itself* under the same censure of disability and insufficiency.

§7. "For under it the people received the law." The subject spoken of is (*ὁ λαός*) *the people*, that is, in the wilderness; the body of the church, to whom the law and priesthood were given immediately by the ministry of Moses. But after this, the whole posterity of Abraham in their successive generations were one *people* with them, and are so esteemed. For, "a people" is still the same, and, as a people never dies till all the individuals that belong to it are cut off, so by this "people" the whole church of all ages under the Old Testament is intended.

Of them he says, (*νομοθετήτο*) *they were legalised*. The Greek word (*νομοθετέω*, *legem ferre*, *legem sancire*, *legem imponere*) is to make, constitute, impose a law. And the passive (*νομοθετῆσθαι*) when applied to persons, is (*legi, latæ subijci, legem latam accipere*) to be made subject to a law; to receive the law made to oblige them; we have therefore not amiss rendered it, "re-

ceived the law." But the sense of the expression is farther regulated by the *nature* of a law; they so received it, as to be made *subject to it*, to be *obliged by it*. Other things may be *otherwise received*; but a law is received by coming under its obligation. Or because the law was the foundation and instrument of their whole state, both in things sacred and civil, the meaning of the word may be, they were "brought into that state and condition whereinto the law disposed them." This is said to be done, (*ἐν αὐτῇ*) *under it*; that is, (*ἱερωσύνη*) the *priesthood*. His intention is to prove, that perfection was not to be obtained by the Levitical priesthood; to this end he was to consider that priesthood under all its advantages. Now although it was some commendation of that priesthood that it was appointed of God, or confirmed by a *law*, yet was it a far greater advancement that the *whole law* was given with it, and depended on it. Besides, the most probable reason of the introduction of this clause by the particle (*γὰρ*) *for*, was to bring in the *whole law* into the same argument, that perfection was not attainable by it. "Received the law *under the priesthood*." Was the priesthood then *before the law*? No: for the word, as before noticed, doth not signify the *giving* of the law to them, but their being *legalized*, or brought under the power of it. Wherefore, although *some part* of the law was given before the institution of that priesthood, yet the people were not brought into *actual obedience* of it but by virtue thereof. But moreover: the apostle in this place hath a special respect to the *law*, as it was the cause and rule of religious worship, of sacrifices, ceremonies, and other ordinances of divine service. For in that part of the law the Hebrews placed all their hopes of perfection, which the *moral law* could not give them. And in *this respect*, the

priesthood was given *before* the law. Besides; the *law* of it was not given out to them until after the erection of the tabernacle, and the separation of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood. Yea, that whole law was given by the voice of God out of *that tabernacle*, whereof Aaron was the minister, Lev. i, 1, 2. So that the people may be said, in the largest sense, to receive the law under that priesthood. Wherefore, the sense of the words is, that *together with the priesthood* the people received the law of commandments contained in ordinances, which yet effected not in their *conjunction* the end that God designed in his worship.

§8. "What farther need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?"

The reason in these words is plain and obvious. For after the institution of that priesthood, and after the execution of it in its greatest glory, splendor, and efficacy, a promise is made in the time of David, of *another priest*, of another order, to arise. Hereof there can be no account given but this alone, that perfection was not attainable by that which was already instituted and executed. This is that *invincible argument* whereby the holy apostle utterly overthrows the *whole system* of the modern Jewish religion, and takes it out of the way. "That another priest," (*ἑτερος ἑτερος*) a priest of another sort. Not only a priest who individually was not yet exhibited, but one of another stock and order. (*Ἀνιστάσθαι*) to arise; that is, to be called, exalted; to stand up in the execution of that office. "After the order of Melchisedec." And here the apostle takes in the consideration of what he had before discoursed concerning the *greatness* of Melchisedec. For he designed not only to prove the thing itself, which is sufficiently done in the testimony out

of the psalmist; but also to evidence the advantage and benefit of the church by this change. And to that end the consideration of the *greatness* of Melchisedec was singularly subservient.

(Και ο κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ααρὼν λεγεσθαι) "and not be called after the order of Aaron;" that is, in the psalm where the rising of this priest is foretold, there he is said to be or *denominated* a priest after the order of Melchisedec, and nothing is spoken of the order of Aaron. The word (λεγεσθαι) "called" denotes only an *external denomination*, not an internal call. It is not of the same import with the word (καλυμμενος) used elsewhere by our apostle, (chap. v, 4, Καλυμμενος ἀπο το Θεου) "called of God;" that is, by an effectual call and separation to office. But answers (προσαγορευθεις, chap. v, 10,) *cognominatus*, "called by external denomination." For the real call of Christ to his office, by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," was such as the call of Melchisedec himself could not represent. Wherefore the *call* of Christ to his office, and that of Melchisedec are no where compared.

§9. *Obs.* 1. An interest in the gospel consisteth not in an outward profession of it, but in a real participation of those things wherein the perfection of its state consists. Men may have a *form* of godliness, and be utter strangers to the power of it. Multitudes in all ages have made a profession of the gospel, who yet have no experience in themselves of its real benefits. All that they obtain is but to deceive their souls into eternal ruin. For they live in some kind of expectation, that in another world they shall obtain rest, and blessedness, and glory, by it. But the gospel will do nothing for them hereafter in things eternal, who

are not here partakers of its power and fruits in things spiritual.

§10. *Obs. 2.* The pre-eminence of the gospel state above the legal is spiritual and undiscernible to a carnal eye. For it is evident that the principal design of the apostle in all these discoveries is, to prove the excellency of the state of the church under the New Testament in its faith, liberty, and worship, above that of the church under the Old. And it is equally evident that he doth not in any of them produce instances of outward pomp, ceremonies, or visible glory, in the confirmation of his assertion. In these *spiritual things* therefore are we to seek after the glory of the gospel, and its pre-eminence above the law. And those who suppose they render the dispensation of the gospel glorious by endeavoring to vie with the law in ceremonies and an *external pomp* of worship, as doth the church of Rome, do wholly cross the design of the inspired penman.

§11. *Obs. 3.* To look for glory in evangelical worship from outward ceremonies and carnal ordinances, is to prefer the Levitical priesthood before that of Christ. That which we are to look for in our worship is such a (*τελειωσις*) *perfection* as we are capable of in this world. This the apostle denies to the Levitical priesthood, and ascribes to the priesthood of Christ. But if such a perfection be found in *ceremonies*, and ordinances outwardly pompous and glorious, of necessity the *contrary* conclusion must be made. But yet so it is come to pass in the world; that men do order things in their public worship, as if they judged that the pure unmixed worship of the gospel had *no glory* in comparison of that of the law, to which they more or less conform themselves.

§12. *Obs.* 4. Put all advantages and privileges whatever together, and they will bring nothing to *perfection* without Jesus Christ. God manifested this in all his revelations and institutions. His *revelations* from the foundation of the world were gradual and partial, increasing the light of the knowledge of his glory from age to age. But put them all together from the first promise, with all its expositions and additions with prophecies of what should afterward come to pass, taking in all the ministry of John the Baptist; yet did they not altogether make a *perfect revelation* of God's mind and will, Heb. i; 1 John i, 18. So also was there great variety in his *institutions*; some were of great efficacy, and of clearer significance than others, but all of them put together made *nothing perfect*. Much more will all the ways that others shall find out to attain righteousness, peace, light, and life before God, come short of rest or perfection.

VERSE 12.

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

§1. The connexion and principal design of the words. §2. (I.) Their explanation. The priesthood being changed, it follows of necessity, §3. That there is a similar change, or abrogation, of the law. §4. (II.) Observations. §5. Other Observations.

§1. **I**N this verse the apostle evidently declares what he intended by the *law* in that foregoing, which the people *received* under the Levitical priesthood. It was the "*whole law of commandments*" contained in ordinances, or the whole law of Moses so far as it was the rule of worship and obedience to the church. For that law it is that followeth the fates of the priesthood.

And herein lieth the stress of the controversy which the apostle then had with the Jews, and which we have at this day with their unbelieving posterity. For the question was, whether the law of Moses was to be *eternal*, absolutely, as the rule of the church's worship, whilst in this world. And it appears in the preaching of the gospel, that what most provoked the Jews was, that there was inferred thereby a cessation of Mosaical institutions. This was that which enraged them to shed the blood of the church, which they were guilty of after the murder of its Divine Head. For they fell on Stephen under pretence that he had said Jesus of Nazareth should destroy "the customs which Moses delivered," Acts vi, 14. And this also provoked their rage against our apostle, Acts xxi, 28, yea, the most of them who were *converted* to the faith of the gospel continued obstinate in this persuasion, that the law of Moses was yet to continue in force, Acts xx, 21. This matter, therefore, which the apostle entereth now upon, was to be managed with care and diligence. This I look upon as the *greatest trial* the faith of men ever had in the concerns of religion; namely, to believe that God should take away, and leave as dead and useless, that whole system of solemn worship which he had appointed in so glorious a manner, and accepted for so many generations. But yet, as we are to acquiesce in the sovereign pleasure of God, made known by revelation, against all reasonings of our own whatsoever; so it must be confessed, faith was greatly bespoken and prepared by the nature, end, and use of all those institutions, which more than intimated, that they were appointed only for a time, and served to introduce a more glorious dispensation of Divine wisdom and grace. His principal design is to prove, that the church is so far from being a

loss by this change, that she receiveth thereby the highest privileges, and greatest blessings that in this world she is capable of.

§2. (I.) "The priesthood being changed;" that is, the priesthood of Levi, appointed and exercised under the law, (*μετεβίβηεντες*) translated, according to some, and others render it *changed*. The former rendering does not reach the whole sense intended. For the office of the priesthood may be *transferred* from one person to another, one family to another, yea, one tribe to another; and yet the priesthood, as to the nature of it, continue the same.

But the proof lies in this, that Moses in the institution of the priesthood made no mention of the tribe of Judah, and therefore if that office be transferred to that tribe, it must be of *another kind* than that before instituted. And, on this supposition, that which he intends to prove follows evidently upon the translation of the priesthood. For all the sacred services and worship, which the law required, were so confined, or at least had that respect to the Levitical priesthood, as that no part of it, no sacred duty whatever could be performed, on a supposition of taking away the priesthood from that tribe and family. Wherefore, upon a supposition of the ceasing or changing of the priesthood in that family, the whole law of ordinances became *impracticable*, useless, and without power; especially seeing there was no provision made in the law itself for a priesthood in any other tribe. Besides; such was the contexture of the law, and such the sanction of it, (cursed is he who continueth not in *all things* written in the law to do them,) that if *any thing* be taken out of it, if its order be disturbed, if any alteration be made, or any transgression be dis-

pensed with or exempted from the curse, the whole fabric must of necessity fall to the ground.

But yet it is not a mere *transferring of the priesthood* from one tribe to another, that is here intended by the apostle. For there is such a change of the *priesthood* as there is of the *law*. But the change of the law was (*αἰνῶς*) a disannulling or abolishing. verse 18, such therefore must the change of the priesthood be.

It may therefore be inquired on what grounds this priesthood was to be abolished, and by what means it was actually taken away?

That it was so to be abolished the apostle proves from hence, *viz.* That before the institution of that priesthood there was another far more excellent, that of Melchisedec. That the Holy Ghost had declared that this more excellent one was introduced to represent another priesthood afterwards to be established, and which could not be that of Levi: nay it was impossible it should be consistent with that of Levi; or that the latter should be continued after the other was brought in. For this priest was to be of another tribe; and his priesthood and sacrifice was to be of another kind. On the other hand, the priesthood of Aaron could never accomplish the true and proper ends of the priesthood, which the church stood in need of, and without which it could not be *consummate*; and was in its own nature and duties inconsistent with any priesthood that was not of its own order. *It must therefore be abolished.*

It may therefore be inquired, *how* the priesthood was *changed*? It was done by the *appointment of God*. For his introduction of another priest, when that was actually accomplished, had the force of a *repealing law*. The institution of the former was ab-

regated thereby without any other constitution; for as to its use, it then ceased of itself.

§3. The next thing considerable in these words is, the inference which the apostle makes from his assertion and proof of it: "There is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Εξ αναγκης) *Of necessity*; from the necessary dependence of the things mentioned, the one on the other. For whereas the whole administration of the law, so far as it concerned the expiation of sin by sacrifices; and the solemn worship of God in the tabernacle or temple, depended absolutely on the Aaronical priesthood, so as that without it no one sacrifice could be offered to God, nor any ordinance of Divine worship be observed; that priesthood being abolished and taken out of the way, the law itself "of necessity" and unavoidably ceaseth.

Wherefore there is also (νομος μελαμβησις) "*a change of the law*;" that is, an *abolition* of it. For it is a change of the same nature with the change of the *priesthood*; which, as we have shewn, was its abolition. And how this came to pass, the word (γινεται) *made*, declares; there is "*made*" a change of the priesthood; yet not so, but that there was an *act of the will* and authority of God on the law in itself. So is the law of commandments contained in ordinances "taken out of the way," being "nailed to the cross of Christ," where he left it completely accomplished. But moreover, as the law in its institutions was an *instructive revelation*, and taught many things concerning the nature of sin, its expiration and cleansing, representing, though darkly, good things to come: so it is yet continued as a part of the revealed will of God. And the light of the gospel being brought to it, we may learn things far more clearly out of it, than ever the Jews of old could.

And the force of the argument here insisted on by the apostle against the absolute perpetuity of the Jewish law, (which was of old, and still continueth to be the head of the controversy between the Jews and the Christian church) is so unavoidable, that some of them have been compelled to acknowledge that in the days of the Messiah legal sacrifices and the rest of their ceremonies shall cease; though the most of them understand that their cause is given up thereby. And they have no other way to free themselves from this argument, but by denying that Melchisedec was a priest, or that it is the Messiah who is prophesied of Psalm cx, which evidences of a desperate cause, and more desperate defenders of it, have been elsewhere convinced of folly.

§4. (II.) Some observations here offer; and,

1. Notwithstanding the great and many provocations of them by whom the Levitical priesthood was discharged, yet God took it not away until it had accomplished the end for which it was designed. Neither the wickedness of the people, nor of the priests themselves, could provoke the Lord to revoke his institution, until the *appointed end* of it was come. And it is no small part of the blindness of the present Jews, to think that God would utterly abolish his own ordinance, as they must acknowledge he hath done, if he would have it to be of any longer use in the church. For sixteen hundred years they have not had any legal priest among them, nor is it possible they should, according to the law, even though they were actually restored to their own pretended right in Canaan. For they have utterly lost the distinction of tribes among them, nor can any of them in the least pretend that they are of the lineage of the priests; and for any one to usurp that office who is not lineally descended from

Aaron, they own to be an abomination: As therefore they know not how to look for a Messiah from the tribe of Judah, seeing all sacred genealogy is at an end; no more can they look for a priest of the house of Aaron. Again observe,

2. The efficacy of all ordinances, or institutions of worship, depends on the will of God alone:

3. Divine institutions cease not without an express Divine abrogation. Where they are once granted and erected by the authority of God, they can never cease without an express act of the same authority taking them away.

4. God will never abrogate any institution, or ordinance of worship, to the disadvantage of the church. He would not abolish the priesthood of Levi, until that which was incomparably more excellent was introduced and established.

5. God in his wisdom so ordered all things, that the taking away of the priesthood of the law, gave it its greatest glory; and what more honorable issue could it come to? The Jews by their pretended adherence to it, are they who cast the highest dishonor upon it.

§5. We may further infer the following things:

1. How it is a fruit of the manifold wisdom of God, that it was first a great mercy to receive the law, and afterwards a greater to take it away. And,

2. If under the law the whole worship of God did so depend on the priesthood, that upon *that* being taken away, the whole worship of God itself was to cease, as being no more acceptable before God; how much is all worship under the New Testament rejected by him, if there be not a due regard therein to the Lord Christ as the only high priest of the church, and the efficacy of his discharge of that office.

3. It is the highest vanity to pretend use or continuance in the church, from possession or prescription, or pretended benefit, beauty, order, or advantage, when such the mind of God is declared against it.

VERSE 12.

For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

§1—3. (I.) Exposition of the text. §4. (II.) Brief observations.

§1. (I.) **T**HE causal conjunction (*γὰρ*) *for*, doth not only intimate a pursuit of the foregoing argument, but also an entrance upon the express application of the whole preceding discourse to the person of *Jesus Christ*, the true and only high priest of the church. (*Εφ' ου λεγεται ταυτα*, that is, *περι ε, de quo*) *he concerning whom*; (*quem designaverunt hæc ad quem hæc pertinent*) *He* who is designed in all these things, to whom they all belong. He, with respect to whom, (*ταυτα*) *these things*, that is, all that hath been spoken concerning Melchisedec and his priesthood, and that naturally thence follow. For although sundry of them were spoken immediately concerning other persons and things; yet they all belong *ultimately* and perfectly to Christ alone, whom they represented and made way for.

§2. It is added: "He pertained to another tribe;" to one of the tribes excluded from an interest in the legal priesthood. And this I look upon as the principal reason of the distinction of that people into *their tribes*; namely, that God thereby might provide for their instruction, as to the continuance of the legal worship among them, which could be no longer continued than the priesthood was reserved to that one

tribe, to which it was originally granted; (*μελεσχῆναι*, see on chap. ii, 11, 12.) His share, lot, and interest lay in another tribe.

§3. Of which no man gave attendance at the altar; (*αφ' ἧς*) *whereof*, from which, none that was genealogized attended at the altar, that is, had right so to do. That expression (*προς ἐρχόμε τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ*) *attended*, *waited on the altar*, may be a synecdochical description of the whole priestly office, from its principal work and duty. But I suppose the apostle may not only include the priests, to whom the immediate work of sacrificing at the altar belonged, but all those who *attended the services* of it, (though they could neither offer burnt incense nor sacrifice) that is, all the Levites in their courses. For he so excludes the *tribe*, whereof he speaks, from the least relation to the sacerdotal work or office.

§4. (II.) Two or three brief observations here offer themselves:

1. That it is our duty in studying the scripture to inquire diligently after what is spoken and taught concerning Jesus Christ. This our apostle, and this our Lord himself gives in charge, John v, 39, "Search the scriptures, they are they which testify of me." Our principal aim in searching the scriptures ought to be, that we may find out what they say, and what they testify concerning Christ, 1 Pet. i, 11, 12. Let the pains, and industry, and skill of men, in reading and interpreting the scriptures, be what they will, without this design they will never rightly be understood, nor duly improved.

2. All men's rights, duties, and privileges in sacred things, are fixed and limited by Divine institution. And,

3. Seeing Christ himself had no right to minister at the material altar, the re-introduction of *such altars* is inconsistent with the perpetual continuance of the priesthood.

VERSE 14.

For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

§1. The evidence of our Lord's descent from Judah. §2. 3. The other part of the words explained. §4. Observations.

§1. **T**HE word (προδηλον) *evident*, seems to intimate what was *manifest beforehand*; and this may not only respect, but be confined to the preceding promises and declarations, that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah and of the family of David. And thus it was *manifest* to them beforehand. For to Judah the promise was solemnly confined, Gen. xlix, 8—10, and frequently reiterated to David. And none of the unbelieving Jews made use of this objection, "that he was not of the tribe of Judah," which, if they could have managed, had absolutely justified them in their unbelief.

It was in those days manifest by his *known genealogy*; for by the providence of God his parents were *publicly enrolled* of the family of David, in consequence of the tax appointed by Augustus Cæsar, Luke ii, 4. And this was yet made more famous by the cruelty of Herod, seeking his destruction among the children of *Bethlehem*, Matt. ii. The alliance between the blessed Virgin and Elizabeth was doubtless by an antecedent *intermarriage* of the tribes of Judah and Levi, as Elizabeth's mother might be sister to the father or grandfather of the holy Virgin. And this was not only *lawful* between the tribes of Judah and

Levi, or the regal and sacerdotal families, whence Jehoshabeath, the wife of Jehoidah, was the daughter of Jehoram the king, 2 Chron. xxii, 11, as some have imagined; but such marriages were usual and lawful among all other tribes, where women had no inheritance of land, which was expressly provided against by a particular law. And this very law of exception sufficiently proves the liberty of all others. Both the express limitation of the law to those who possessed inheritances, and the reason of it for the preservation of the lots of each tribe entire, as Num. xxxvi, 3, 4, 8, manifest, that all other were at liberty to marry any Israelite, be he of what tribe soever. And thus the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, one by a *legal*, the other by a *natural* line, were both of them from the tribe of Judah, and family of David.

§2. (Ανατέλλει,) *he sprang*; the word (αναιελλω) is usually taken in an active sense, to *cause to rise*; (Matt. v, 45, τον ηλιον αυτε ανατελλει) *he causeth his sun to rise*; and some think it peculiarly denotes the *rising of the sun*, in distinction from the other planets. Hence (ανατολη) *the east*, from the rising of the sun. So the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is called “the rising of the sun of righteousness” with healing in his wings; Mal. iv, 2, who is (ανατολη εξ υψους, Luke i, 78,) “*The day-spring from on high*,” a “light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.”

§3. (Εις ην φυλην, i. e. *de qua tribu*) *with reference to which tribe*, Moses, as the law-giver, when the office of the priesthood was instituted in the church, and confirmed by special law or ordinance, *spake nothing*; for as the first institution of it was directly confined to the tribe of Levi, and house of Aaron, so there is not in all the law of Moses the least intimation, that, on any occasion, it should be translated to the tribe of

Judah. Nor was it possible without the alteration and abolition of the *whole law*; for the whole instituted worship of God was to cease, rather than any one of that tribe should officiate in the office of the priesthood. Whatever is not revealed and appointed in the worship of God, by God himself, is to be considered as nothing; yea, as that which is to be rejected.

§4. From the whole observe:

1. It pleaseth God to give sufficient evidence to the accomplishment of his promise; and,
2. Divine revelation gives bounds, positively and negatively, to the worship of God.

VERSES 15—17.

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

§1. The introduction and subject stated. §2. (I.) The manner of introducing the argument. §3, 4. (II.) The argument itself. §5. (III.) The illustration of the argument. §6. (IV.) The confirmation of the whole. §7—9. (V.) Observations.

§1. **T**HAT the Aaronical priesthood was to be *changed*, and consequently the whole law of ordinances that depended thereon; and that the time wherein this change was to be made was *now come*, is that which is here recapitulated and confirmed. And there are four things to be considered in these words:

1. The manner of introducing this new argument, "and it is yet far more evident."
2. The medium or argument itself; "There was another priest to arise after the similitude of Melchisedec."

3. The illustration of this argument; "who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

4. The confirmation of the whole with the testimony of David; "For he testifieth, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

§2. (1.) "And it is yet far more evident." The conjunctive particle (*καί*) *and*, connects this consideration with that foregoing, as of the same nature and tendency. The thing spoken of is said to be (*καταδηλον*) yet more open and *convincingly evident*. Hence he adds, that it is (*περισσολερον, magis patet, abundantius, manifestum*) of an *abundant* efficacy for conviction; there is more *immediate force* in this consideration to prove the cessation of the Levitical priesthood, "That another priest was to arise after the similitude of Melchisedec," than was merely in this, "That our Lord sprang of the tribe of Judah."

And therefore he adds (*ετι*) *yet*; that is, above all that hath been collected from the consideration of Melchisedec, there is yet this uncontrollable evidence to our purpose remaining. It may be, we see not why he should insist so much upon, and so narrowly scan, all particulars in this matter. For being freed by the gospel from the power of temptations about it, and being of the Gentiles who were never concerned in it, we cannot be sensible of the just importance of what is under confirmation. The truth is, he hath the greatest argument in hand that was ever controverted in the church of God, and upon the determination of which the salvation or ruin of the church depended. The worship he treated of was immediately instituted by God himself, and had now continued near fifteen hundred years in the church. All this while it had been the certain rule of God's *acceptance* of the people, or

his *anger* towards them; for whilst they complied with it, his blessing was continually upon them; and the neglect of it was still punished with severity. And the last caution that God had given them by the ministry of the last prophet he sent to them, was, that they should abide in the observance of the law of Moses, lest he come and smite the whole earth with a curse, Mal. iv. It was therefore very necessary that the apostle should proceed *warily, distinctly, and gradually*.

§3. (II.) The argument itself is; "if another priest arise after the similitude of Melchisedec." (E.) *if* is generally taken here to be not a *conditional*, but a *causal* conjunction. And it is yet far more evident, "*if so be*" that another priest. As to the argument in general, we must observe, that the design of the apostle in this place is not to demonstrate the *dignity* and eminency of the priesthood of Christ from that of Melchisedec his type, which he had done before sufficiently; he doth not produce the same words and arguments again to the *same purpose*; but what he aims at is, to prove from the *same testimony*, whereby he had proved the dignity of Christ's priesthood, the necessary abolition of the Levitical. Wherefore he doth not insist on the *whole* of the testimony before pleaded, but only of that one thing of *another priest*, necessarily included.

§4. The subject spoken of is (*ἄλλος ἱερεὺς*) *another priest*; "Another" in this case is a *stranger*, one that is not of the house or family of Aaron. And nothing can be more evident than that the Levitical priesthood, and the whole law of divine worship, must be taken away, if it appear that any (*ἄλλος ἱερεὺς*) *stranger*, may be admitted into that office; much more, if it were *necessary* that it should be so. For the law of the priesthood took care of nothing more than that no *stranger*,

that was not of the house of Aaron, should be called to that office. See Exod. xxix, 33, &c. If therefore there must be "*another priest*," that was not of the lineage of Aaron, the latter is abolished. For whereas God had ordered all things in the scripture concerning Melchisedec, that he might be (ver. 3,) "*made like to the Son of God*," he is said to arise (*κατα την ομοιότητα*) *according to the likeness or similitude* of Melchisedec. For every similitude is mutual, one thing is as like to another, as that is to it. This therefore is evident, that there was to be (*εἰστος*) *another priest*; not only (*ἄλλος*) *merely another*, but (*ἀλλογενής*) *one of another stock*; and not so much as after the "*similitude*" of Aaron. Christ rising in his offices puts an end to all other things that pretend usefulness to the same end with them. When, for instance, he arose as a king, he did not put an end to the *office and power of kings* in the *world*, but he did to the *typical kingdoms* over the *church*, even as he did to the *typical priesthood*, by rising as the priest of it.

§5. (III.) Who was made, not after the law, &c. This verse contains an illustration and confirmation of the foregoing assertion, by a declaration of the way and manner how this other priest, who was not of the seed of Aaron, should come to that office, (*ὅς γεγενε*) *who was made* a priest; that is, by the appointment and designation of the Father. For the *authority of God* alone is the foundation of all office, duty, and power in the church. "Not according to the law of a carnal commandment;" Syriac version, "The law of bodily commandments." It is unquestionable that the apostle by this expression intendeth, in the first place, the law of the Levitical priesthood, or the way and manner whereby the Aaronical priests were first called and vested with their offices; and then any other law, constitution, rule, or order of the same kind. He

was made a priest neither by that law, nor *any other* like it.

Why doth the apostle call this commandment *carnal* or *fleshly*? It may be on either of these three accounts:

1. With respect to the *sacrifices* which were the principal part of the consecration of Aaron to his office. These were the *flesh*, or the bodies of beasts; as the *Syriac* reads these words: "The commandment of bodies," that is, of beasts to be sacrificed. In themselves, and their relation to the Jewish state, they reached no farther than the "purifying of the *flesh*."

2. It may be called "carnal," because that priesthood was to be continued by *carnal propagation* only, was confined to the *carnal seed* of Aaron, wherein this other priest had no interest.

3. Respect may be had to the *whole system* of those laws and institutions of worship, in opposition to the dispensation of the *spirit* under the gospel and its institutions. None of these ways was the Lord Christ made a priest. He was not dedicated to his office by the sacrifice of beasts; he was not of the carnal seed of Aaron; and no constitution or ordinance of the law conveyed to him either right or title to the priesthood. It is therefore abundantly evident, that he was in no sense made a priest according to the law of a carnal commandment, "but according to the power of an indissoluble life." The (*ζωή αναλλαντος*) *indissoluble life* here intended, is the life of Christ himself. Hereto belonged, or from hence proceeded, that (*δυναμις*) *power*, whereby he was made a priest. And both the office itself and the discharge of it are here intended. As to the *office itself*, this endless life of Christ is his *life* as the Son of God. Hereon depends his own mediatory life for ever, and his conferring of eternal life on us,

John 7, 26, 27. And to be a priest by virtue of, or according to this power, stands in direct opposition to the law of a carnal commandment; because, thereby alone was he rendered meet to discharge that office, wherein God was to redeem his church by his own blood, Acts xx, 28. By "*power*" therefore here, both *meetness* and *ability* are intended; and both these the Lord Christ had from his divine nature, and his endless life inseparable from it.

I say, therefore, this life of Christ was not absolutely the life of the human nature, considered separately from his divine; but was the life of the *person of the Son of God*; God and man in one person. And so his life was *endless*; for although he was once (though a priest) truly and really dead in his human nature, he was still alive in his indissoluble person.

§6. (IV.) The proof of all before asserted is given in the testimony of the psalmist so often before appealed to: "For he testifieth thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

The introduction of this testimony is by (*μαρτυρεῖ*) he *witnesseth*, or *testifieth*, that is, David, or rather the Holy Ghost speaking by David. *Testifies*; because he used his words by way of *testimony* to what he had delivered; "Thou art, a priest," although a stranger from the Aaronical line, "after the order of Melchisedec." The priesthood of Christ, in the mind of God, was the eternal idea, or original exemplar of the priesthood of Melchisedec. God brought forth the latter, and vested him with his office, in such a manner, as that he might outwardly represent, in sundry things, the original idea of Christ's priesthood. Hence he and his priesthood became an *external exemplar* of the priesthood of Christ as to its actual exhibition; and therefore he is said to be made a priest "after his order,"

that is, suitably to the representation made thereof in him. "A priest *for ever*." This word is also applied to the law and legal priesthood, and signifies "a duration commensurate to the state and condition of the things to which it is applied." While the (עולם) *age* of the law continued, all the promises annexed to it stood in force; and when ascribed to the *new state of things*, under the gospel, it doth not signify *absolute eternity*, but a certain unchangeable duration to the end of the time and works of the gospel. For then shall the exercise of the priesthood of Christ cease with his whole mediatory work and office, 1 Cor. xv, 28; Christ therefore is said to be a priest *for ever*—In respect of his *person*, endued with an "endless life;"—of the *execution of his office* to the end of it; (he lives *for ever* to make intercession)—Of the *effect* of his office, which is to save believers to the utmost, or with an *everlasting salvation*.

§7. (V.) *Obs.* 1. Present truths are earnestly to be contended for. So the apostle Peter would have believers established (εν τη παρεση αληθεια) "in the present truth." All truth is eternal, and in itself equally subsistent and present in all ages; but it is especially so, either from the great use of it in some seasons, or as to any great opposition made to it. So this doctrine about the abolition of the Mosaical ceremonies and institutions, with the introduction of a new priesthood and a new ordinance of worship, was then the *present truth*, in the knowledge and confirmation of which the church was eternally concerned. And so may other truths be at other seasons; as for instance, the *Deity* or *satisfaction* of Christ, justification by *faith*, and the like, being so opposed, become the *present truth* of the age; and by requiring a steady adherence to which, God will *try the faith of his people*; and he requires

that they be earnestly pleaded for. Satan is always awake and attentive to his advantages; and therefore though he hates *all* truth, yet doth he not at all times equally attempt all, but waits to see an inclination in men from their *lusts*, or *prejudices*, or interests in this world, against any special truth, or appointed way of divine worship. When he finds things so ready prepared, he falls to *his* work; and then should we fall to *ours*.

§8. *Obs. 2.* Important truths should be strongly confirmed; but arguments that are *equally true* may yet, in point of evidence, not be *equally cogent*. Yet in the confirmation of the truth we may use *every help* that is *true* and *seasonable*, though some of them may be more effectual to our end than others. The things which our apostle had discoursed concerning Melchisedec and his priesthood were more effectually *demonstrative* of the change of the Levitical priesthood, than what he had newly observed concerning the rising of our Lord Jesus Christ from the tribe of Judah.

§9. To the foregoing observations we may add the following:

1. What *seemed to be wanting* to Christ in his entrance into any of his offices, or in the discharge of them, was on the account of a *greater glory*. Aaron was made a priest with a great *outward* solemnity; but yet in reality these things had *no glory*, in comparison of that excelling glory, which accompanied those *invisible* acts of divine authority, wisdom, and grace, which communicated to him his office.

2. The eternal continuance of Christ's *person* gives eternal continuance and efficacy to his *office*. Because he "*lives* for ever," he is "*a priest* for ever." His *life* is the foundation of his endless *priesthood*. Whilst he

lives we want not a priest; and therefore he says, **that**, "because he lives, we shall live also."

3. To make *new priests* in the church, is **virtually** to renounce the faith of Christ's living for ever as **our** priest; or to suppose that he is not sufficient to the **discharge** of his office.

4. The alteration that God made in the church by the introduction of the priesthood of Christ was **progressive** towards its *perfection*. To return therefore to legal ceremonies in the worship of God, is to go back to poor "beggary elements and rudiments of the world."

VERSES 18, 19.

For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did: by the which we draw nigh unto God.

§1. Connexion of the text. §2. (I.) Exposition of the words. §3. The commandment abrogated. How this could be. §4. How it was done. §5—8. The reason why. §9—13. Observations.

§1. **I**N the twelfth verse of this chapter the apostle affirms, that the priesthood being changed, there was of necessity a change made of the law also. Having proved the former he now proceeds to confirm his inference from it by declaring that the priest and priesthood, that were promised to be introduced, were in all things inconsistent with the law.

§2. (I.) The (*εντολη*) *command*, is of as large a signification (ver. 18, as the *νομος*, *Law*, in ver. 19,) for the same thing is intended in both. It is not therefore the *peculiar command* for the institution of the legal priesthood that is intended, but the *whole system* of Mosaical institutions. And indeed it was of such a

nature and constitution, that, *pull one pin* out of the fabric, and the whole must fall to the ground. Nor is it the whole *ceremonial law* only that is intended, but the *moral law* also:—so far as it was compacted with the other in one body of precepts for the same end. For with respect to the efficacy of the *whole law of Moses*, as to our drawing nigh to God, it is here considered.

“The commandment going before,” is the law whereby the worship of God was regulated before the introduction of the gospel.

Of this “command” or “law,” it is affirmed, that there is an (*αἰθέσις*) *abrogation*, which consists in taking away all its power of obliging to obedience or punishment. The apostle elsewhere expresseth that same act by another word (*καταργέω*, Eph. ii, 15; 2 Tim. i, 10.)

§3. It is therefore plainly declared, that the law is *abrogated*, abolished, disannulled: but we must yet farther inquire—How this *could* be done?—By what *means*? and—For what *reason*?

A law may be *abrogated* when, on any consideration whatever, its *obligation to practice* is taken away. Thus was it with this law; for, as every other law, it may be considered two ways:

1. With respect to its *main end*, and directive power, to guide. The moral law, in the first covenant, had no other end but *obedience* and *rewardableness*. It is the entire instrument of our living to God, and of our eternal consequent rewards. But as in its *renovation* it was made a *part* of the *law here intended*, it came with it to be of another nature, or to have another *use and end*. For the whole scope and design of this law was to direct men, not to look after *that good* which was its end, in *obedience to itself*, but

in *something else* that it directed to by that obedience. This *end*, therefore, is principally to be considered in this law, which when it is attained, the law is established, although its obligation to obedience *to itself* do necessarily cease. Now this end of the law was Christ and his righteousness, as the apostle expressly declares; "Christ is the *end* of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x, 4. This is called by our Savior, (πληρῶσαι τον νομον) *to fulfil the law*; and is opposed to the *destroying* of it, Mat. v, 17, "I came not (απολῦσαι) *to destroy*, or dissolve, the law, but to (πληρῶσαι) *fulfil* it;" that is, not to abrogate it, as that which either wanted a *just authority*, or was not *good* or useful, the common reasons of the abrogating laws; but I came to accomplish its whole end; whereon it would cease to oblige.

2. The law may be considered with respect to the *particular duties*, that it required and prescribed. And because the whole law had *its end*, these were appointed only until the end was attained. So saith our apostle, "They were imposed until the time of reformation," chap. ix, 18. Wherefore two things accompanied *this law* in its first institution:—That *obedience* to its commands would not produce the good it directed to, as formerly respecting the law itself; and—That the *duties it required* had a limited time allotted them. Wherefore, without the least disparagement to the authority whereby it was given, or its own holiness and goodness, it might be disannulled as to its actual obligation. For the end of it being fully accomplished, it is no less established than if the observance of it had been continued to the end of the world.

§4. We must next inquire how this *was* done? We find it was done two ways:

1. *Really* and *virtually* by Christ himself in his own person. For the fulfilling of it was that which really and virtually took away all its obligatory power. For what should it oblige men to? An answer is ready to all its demands, *viz.* that they are *fulfilled*: and as to what was significative in its duties, it is all *really exhibited*; so that on no account can it any more oblige the consciences of men. This the apostle explains by the relation that subsists between a man and his wife, with the attendant obligation to mutual duties, Rom. vi, 1—6. Whilst the husband is *alive*, the wife is obliged to all conjugal duties towards him, and him alone; but upon his *death* that obligation ceaseth of itself, and she is at liberty to marry another. So were we obliged to the law, whilst it was *alive*, whilst it stood in its force and vigor; but when through the death of Christ the law was accomplished, it died as to the *relation* that subsisted between it and us, whereon all its obliging power was disannulled. This was that whereby the law was *really* and *virtually* abrogated.

2. It was abrogated *declaratively*; in general, by the promulgation and preaching of the gospel, where the accomplishment and cessation of it were declared; and also by the introduction of new ordinances of worship. Besides, there was a determination made in the case by the Holy Ghost, Acts xv, that the gospel as preached to the gentiles, was not a way of *prose-lyting* them to Judaism, but the bringing of them to a new church state by an interest in the promise and covenant of Abraham, given and made four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law.

As to those of the Hebrews who yet would not understand these express declarations; God, to put an end to all disputes about his will in this matter, gave a

dreadful (*adefinite*) *abolition* to it, in the total, final, irrevocable destruction of the city and temple, with all the instruments and vessels of its worship, especially of the priesthood and all that belonged to it. Thus was the law *disannulled*, and thus was it *declared* to be so.

§5. The close of the verse gives an especial *reason* of this abrogation of the *command*, taken from its own nature and efficacy; "for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." The commandment in this verse is of equal extent and signification with the *law* in the next; and the law there evidently intends the *whole law*, moral and ceremonial, as given by Moses, to the church of Israel. And this is now charged with "weakness and unprofitableness," both which make a law fit to be disannulled. But how can it be supposed that the good and holy God should prescribe such a law to his people, as was always weak and unprofitable? I answer, that the whole law may be considered two ways:—As absolutely in itself; and—with respect to the end for which it was given, and the persons to whom it was given. *In itself*, no reflection can be made upon it, being an effect of the wisdom, holiness, and truth of God. But they to whom it was given being *sinners*, antecedently to the giving of this law, it could never take away any defilement of sin from the soul, but became weak and unprofitable to any such end. It could not be a cause or means of righteousness to them who were so disabled. Wherefore "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Sinners stand in need of the *expiation of sin*, for being already guilty, it is to no purpose to think of a righteousness for the future, unless their present guilt be first expiated. The *moral law* hath nothing in it, that respects the guilt of sin, but the *curse only*. It

must therefore be expected from the *ceremonial* law, or no way at all. This indeed represented and prefigured what would do so, but all ceremonies in themselves were insufficient to any such end; and in this state doth the apostle pronounce it *weak* and *unprofitable*.

But it may be yet farther inquired, why God did give this law to the people, which, although it were good in itself, could not attain the end? The apostle gives a full answer to this inquiry: first, "it was added *because of transgression*, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made, Gal. iii, 19; to discover the *nature* of sin, that the consciences of men might be made sensible thereof; to restrain sins by its prohibitions, that it might not deluge the whole church; and to represent the way and means, though obscurely, whereby sin might be expiated. Secondly, it was to shut up men under a sense of the guilt of sin, and so with a degree of severity drive them out of themselves, and from all expectation of righteousness by their own works, that so they might be brought to Christ, first in the promise, and then as actually exhibited.

§6. "For the law made nothing perfect." The subject spoken of is (*ο νομος*) *the law*; that is, as before observed, the whole system of Mosaical ordinances, as it was the *covenant* which God made with the people in Horeb. For we should not forget that the apostle takes the commandment and the law for the same in this chapter; and the covenant in the next; for the same with them both. And he treats of them principally in the instance of the Levitical priesthood; partly because it was the introduction of another priesthood, whereby the whole was disannulled.

Of this law, commandment, or covenant, it is said that (*δεν ἐτελειωσε*) "it made *nothing* perfect;" that is, none of the things which we treat of. It did not make the *church state* perfect, it did not make the *worship of God* perfect; it did not perfect the *promises* given to Abraham, in their accomplishment; it did not make a perfect *covenant* between God and man; it had a shadow, an obscure representation, of all these things, but it made *NOTHING* perfect. See on verse 11, the import of *ἐτελειωσε*.

§7. Perfection being thus denied to the law, it is added (*ἐπεισῶγγε δε κρείττονος ἐλπίδος*) "but the bringing in of a better hope." The words are elliptical, and without a supplement give no certain sense. And this may be made by the verb substantive (*ἦν*) *was*, it made *nothing* perfect, but it *was* the bringing in of a better hope. This sense is *true*, though not, as I judge, directly intended in these words. The defective speech therefore is to be supplied by (*ἐτελειωσε*) *made perfect*; as we do it by *did*; that is, "did make all things perfect."

This the word (*ἐπεισῶγγε*) "bringing in" leads to. For it is as much as the *introduction* of one thing *after* or *upon* another. The priesthood and sacrifice of Christ were brought in *after* the law, *upon* it, *in the room* of it, to effect what the law could not do.

This therefore is the sense of the words: "The introduction of the better hope, after, and upon the law, when a sufficient discovery had been made of its weakness and insufficiency as to this end, made all things perfect, or hath brought the church to that state of consummation, which was designed for it. It is called "*better*" with respect to the law, with all it contained or could effect. This "*better hope*" was not, nor could be, any thing but *Christ himself* and his everlasting priesthood; for in him we are complete,

Col. ii, 10. And "by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified."

"Hope" therefore is used here *metonymically* to design the thing *hoped for*. From the giving of the first promise, Christ, and his coming into the world were the *hope* of all believers.

§8. "By the which we draw nigh unto God;" (ἀϋς) *by which*, may refer—either, to the remote antecedent (εἰσαγωγή) *the introduction*, or bringing in; or, to the nearest (ἐλπίδος) *the hope*; being both of the same gender. But the application is more natural to the next antecedent "by which *hope*." (Εγγίζει) *to draw near*, is a word belonging to the sacerdotal office, denoting the *approach* of the priests to God in his worship. So the *Septuagint* for the most part renders (קרב) the general term for *all access* to God with sacrifices and offerings; and this the apostle intends. Under the Levitical priesthood, the *priests* in their sacrifices and solemn services drew nigh to God; the same is now done *by all believers* under the sacerdotal ministration of Jesus Christ, especially in their prayers and supplications, Eph. ii, 18.

But yet there is a more extensive signification of this expression in scripture, which must not be here excluded. By nature all men are *gone far off from God*. The first general apostasy carried mankind into a most inconceivable *distance* from him. Our moral distance from God as our nature is corrupted, is greater with respect to our relation to him, than our essential distance from him, as we are *creatures*. It is to be far from the love and favor of God, from the knowledge of him, and obedience to him. Wherefore our *drawing nigh* to God, denotes our *recovery* from this estate. "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes *afar off*, are made nigh by the blood of Christ," Eph. ii, 13.

§9. (II.) Let us now proceed to the observations:

1. It is a matter of the highest nature and importance to set up, remove, or change any thing in the worship of God. Unless the authority of God interpose and be made manifest, there is nothing, in these matters, for conscience to rest in. And,

2. The revelation of the will of God, in things relating to his worship, is received with great difficulty, where the minds of men are prepossessed with prejudices and traditions. Notwithstanding all those ways whereby God had revealed his mind concerning the abolition of the Mosaical institutions, yet *the Hebrews* could neither understand nor receive it, until the whole seat of its worship was destroyed.

3. The only securing principle in all things of this nature, is to preserve our souls in an entire subjection to the authority of Christ, and to his alone.

§10. From what is said of the weakness and unprofitableness of the command, observe,

1. The introduction into the church of what is better and more full of grace, in the same kind with what went before, doth disannul what so preceded; but the bringing in of that which is not better, which doth not communicate more grace, doth not. Thus our apostle expressly disputes that the bringing in of the *law* four hundred years after the giving of the *promise*, did not evacuate or any way enervate the promise. The sole reason was, because the promise had more grace and privilege in it than the law had. But here the bringing in of another priesthood, because it was filled with more effectual grace and mercy utterly disannulled that which was instituted before.

2. If God would disannul every thing that was weak and unprofitable in his service, though originally of his own appointment, because it came short of the

grace he intended, much more will he condemn any thing of the same kind that is invented by men.

3. It is vain for any men to look for *that* from the law now it is abolished, which it could not effect in its best estate; and what that is the apostle declares in the next verse.

§11. From the law making nothing perfect, observe,

1. When God hath any gracious end towards the church, it shall not fail, nor his work cease, for want of effectual means to accomplish it. But where God hath laid aside any means, and sufficiently declared that it is not his holy pleasure to do it in such a way, or to such a length as we would desire for the fulfilling of his promises, it is not duty, but obstinacy and selfishness to adhere to it with any such expectations.

2. Believers of old, who lived *under* the law; did not live *upon* the law, but upon Christ hoped for. Christ is the same (that is, to the church) yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If justification, if salvation could be had any other way, or by any other means, then was his coming needless, and his death in vain. The promise of *him*, and not of the law which he had broken, was the relief and salvation of Adam. On the same promise, which virtually contained and exhibited to believers all the benefits of his mediation, as it was frequently renewed and variously explained, did all the Old Testament saints live.

3. The Lord Christ by his priesthood and sacrifice perfects the church and all things belonging to it, Col. ii, 10.

§12. *Obs.* Out of Christ, or without him, all mankind are at an inconceivable distance from God; and a distance it is of the worst kind, even that which has an effect of mutual enmity. The cause of it was on our part voluntary, and the effect of it the height of

misery. And however any may flatter and deceive themselves, it is the present condition of all who have not an interest in Christ by faith. They are far off from God, as he is the foundation of all goodness and blessedness; inhabiting, as the prophet speaks, the parched places of the wilderness, and shall not see when good cometh, Jer. xvii, 6. Far from the dews and showers of mercy, far from Divine love and favor, cast out of the bounds of them, as Adam out of paradise, without any hope or power to return. The flaming sword of the law turns every way to keep them from the tree of life. Yet let them fly whither they please, wish for mountains and rocks to fall on them, hide themselves in the darkness and shades of their own ignorance, like Adam among the trees of the garden, or immerge themselves in the pleasures of sin for a season; all is one, the wrath of God abideth on them. And they are far from God in their own minds also; being alienated from him, enemies against him, and in all things allied to Satan, the head of the apostasy. Thus, and inconceivably worse, is it with all that embrace not this *better hope* to bring them *nigh to God*.

§18. *Obs.* It is an effect of infinite condescension and grace, that God would appoint a way of recovery for those who had wilfully cast themselves into this woful distance from him. Why should God look after such fugitives any more? He had no need of us or of our services in our best condition, much less in that useless, depraved state whereinto we had brought ourselves. And although we had transgressed the rule of our moral dependance on him in the way of obedience, and thereby done what we could to stain and eclipse his glory; yet he knew how to repair it to advantage by reducing us under the order of punishment. By our sins we ourselves come short of the glory of

God, but he could lose none by us, whilst it was absolutely secured by the penalty annexed to the law. When upon the entrance of sin, he came and found Adam in the bushes, wherein he thought foolishly to hide himself, who could expect, (Adam did not,) but that his only design was to apprehend the poor rebellious fugitive, and give him up to condign punishment? But it was quite otherwise; above all thoughts that could ever have entered into the hearts of angels or men, after he had declared the nature of the apostasy, and his own indignation against it, he proposeth and promiseth a way of deliverance and recovery. This is that which the scriptures so magnify under the name of *divine grace and love*, which are beyond expression or conception, John iii, 16. And whereas he might have recalled us to himself, and yet leave some mark of displeasure upon us, to keep us at a greater distance from him than we stood at before; as David brought back his wicked Absalom to Jerusalem, but would not suffer him to come into his presence; he chose to act like himself in infinite wisdom and grace, to bring us yet *nearer* to him, than ever we could approach by the law of our creation. And as the foundation, means, and pledge hereof, he contrived and brought forth that most glorious and unparalleled effect of divine wisdom, in taking our nature into that inconceivable nearness to himself, in the union of it to the person of his Son. For as all things in this "bringing of us nigh to God," who were afar off, are expressive effects of wisdom and grace; so that of taking our nature into union with himself is glorious to astonishment. "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens," Psal. viii, 1. Finally; all our approximation to God in any kind, all our approaches to him in holy worship, is by him alone who

was the blessed hope of the saints under the Old Testament, and is the life of them under the New.

VERSES 20—22.

And in as much as not without an oath he was made priest. For those priests were made without an oath, by him that said to him, the Lord aware, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec: by so much was Jesus made a surety for a better Testament.

§1. Connexion, and recapitulation of the past argument. §2 (I.) Exposition of the words. §3. The Levitical priesthood not confirmed with an oath. §4. But Christ's was. §5. Jesus a surety of a better Testament. §6. What that includes. §7. The person of the surety, Jesus. §8. Remarks on the better covenant. §9. The proper office of a surety. §10. Wherein consists the suretyship of Christ. §11, 12. (II.) Observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle had warned the Hebrews before, that he had many things to say, and those not easy to be understood, concerning Melchisedec. And herein he intended not only those things which he expresseth directly concerning that person and his office, but the things themselves signified thereby in the person and office of Christ. And therefore he omits nothing which may from thence be any way justly represented. So from that one testimony of the psalmist he makes sundry inferences to his purpose:—That the Lord Christ was to be a *priest*, which included in it the cessation of the Levitical priesthood, seeing he was of the tribe of Judah, and not of the tribe of Levi;—That he was to be *another* priest, that is, a priest of *another order*;—And that he was to be a priest *for ever*, so that there should never more upon his death or otherwise, be any need of another priest, nor any possibility of a return of the former priesthood into the church. Neither yet doth he rest here, but observes, moreover, the *manner* how God in the testimony insisted on, de-

clared his purpose of making the Lord Jesus Christ a priest, which was constitutive of his office, viz. by his oath; and thence he takes occasion to manifest how far his priesthood is exalted above that under the law. This last is what lies before us in these verses.

§2. "And inasmuch as not without an oath. (*Kai*) and is oftentimes as much as *moreover*; not an immediate connexion with, or dependance on what went before in particular, but only a *process* in the same general argument. And so it is here a note of *introduction*, of a new special consideration for confirming the (same design. *Kat' oson, eatenus quantum, in quantum*) "*inasmuch*," so much. Hereto answers (*kata toson, in tantum, quanto, tanto*;) by so much, ver. 22. The excellency of the covenant whereof Christ was made mediator, above the old covenant, had proportion with the pre-eminence of his *priesthood* above that of Aaron, in that he was made a priest by an *oath*, but they were without an oath. Two things the apostle supposeth in this negative proposition:—That there were two ways whereby men might be made priests, either with, or without an oath; and, that the dignity of the priesthood depends on, and is declared in the way whereby God was pleased to initiate men into that office.

These two things being in general laid down, as those which could not be denied; the apostle makes application of them in the next verse, distinctly to the priests of the law, on the one hand, and Christ on the other, in a comparison between whom he is now engaged.

§3. "For those priests were made without an oath." In the application of this assertion the apostle affirms, that the priests under the law were made "without an oath." No such thing is mentioned in all that is re-

corded concerning their call and consecration, for indeed God did never solemnly interpose with an oath, in a way of privilege, or mercy, but with direct respect to Jesus Christ. This is the account the apostle gives of the Aaronical priests (*καὶ οἱ μὲν*) and *they truly*; that is, Aaron and all his posterity that exercised the priest's office in a due manner, were all made priests, that is, by God himself. They did not originally take this honor to themselves, but were called of God. But neither all of them nor any of them were made priests by an oath.

§4. "But this with an oath;" (*ὁ δὲ*) but *he, this man*, he who was to be a priest after the order of Melchisedec, (*μεθ' ὀρκωμοσίας*) *with an oath*. His call, constitution, or consecration was confirmed and ratified with an oath; whereas God used not an oath about any thing that belonged to the former. The *form* of it is in these words, "The Lord swear and will not repent," Rom. vii.

The person swearing is God the *Father*, who speaks to the Son in the Psalm cx, 1, "The Lord said to my Lord:" and the *oath* of God is nothing but the solemn, eternal, unchangeable purpose of his will, under a *special mode of declaration*.

- If then it be demanded, *when* God thus swore to Christ? I answer; we must consider the *decree itself* to this purpose, and the peculiar revelation or *declaration* of it, in which two this oath consists. As to the first, it belongs entirely to those eternal transactions between the Father and the Son, which were the original of the priesthood of Christ; and as for the second, it was when he gave out that revelation of his mind with the force and efficacy of an oath in the forementioned Psalm.

That additional expression, “and will not repent,” declares the *nature* of the oath of God, and of the purpose thereby confirmed. When God makes an alteration in any law, rule, order, or constitution, he may be said (*αὐθροταθως*) in accommodation to human feelings, to *repent*. But no alteration or change, no removal or substitution shall be made in this momentous affair.

The *matter* of this oath is, “that Christ should be a priest for ever.” He was not only made a priest with an *oath*, which they were not, but also a *priest for ever*. This adds to the unchangeableness of his office, that he himself in his own person was to bear, exercise, and discharge it without substitute or successor.

And this “*for ever*,” answers to the “for ever,” under the law; each of them being commensurate to the dispensation of that covenant which they respect. For *absolute eternity* belongs not to these things. The “*ever*” of the Old Testament was the duration of the old covenant dispensation; and *this* “for ever,” respects the new covenant, which is to continue to the consummation of all things; no change therein being any way intimated, or appearing consistent with the wisdom and faithfulness of God. In short, the apostle declareth and evinceth four things;

1. That an high priest was peculiarly designed for and initiated into his office by the oath of God, which none other ever was before him.

2. That the person of the high priest is hereby so absolutely determined, as that the church may continually draw nigh to God in the full assurance of faith.

3. That this priesthood is liable to no alteration, succession, or substitution.

4. That from hence ariseth the principal advantage of the New Testament above the Old, as is declared in the next verse.

§5. "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better Testament." (*Kata tou autou*) *by so much*, answers directly to (*κατ' ὅσον*, ver. 20,) *inasmuch*. They are therefore immediately connected. Hence ver. 21, wherein a confirmation is intended of the principal assertion, is justly placed in a *parenthesis* in our translation.

So the sense of the words is to this purpose: "And *inasmuch* as he was not made a priest without an oath, he is by so much made the surety of a better Testament." The words intend,—either, that his being made a priest by an oath made him meet to be a surety of a better Testament; or, that the Testament whereof he was a surety must needs be better than the other; because he, who was made the surety of it, was made priest by an oath. In the one way, he proves the dignity of the priesthood of Christ from the New Testament; and in the other, the dignity of the New Testament from the priesthood of Christ. And we may reconcile both these senses by affirming, that *really and efficiently*, the priesthood gives dignity to the New Testament; and declaratively, the New Testament sets forth the dignity of Christ's priesthood.

It is owned tacitly, that the *priesthood* of Levi, and the *Old Testament* were *good*, or these could not be said to be "*better*" in comparison. But this priesthood and Testament are "*better*," by so much as that, which is confirmed with an oath, is better than that which is not so; which alone gives the just *proportion* of comparison in this place. Wherefore, the design of the comparison is, that whereas this priest after the order of Melchisedec, was designed to be the surety of another Testament, he was confirmed in his office by the oath of God, which gives a pre-eminence both to

his office and the Testament whereof he was to be a surety.

§6. "Jesus was made a surety of a better Testament." Three things are included and supposed in this assertion:—That there was *another Testament* that God had made with his people—that this was a *good Testament*—that this Testament had in some sense a *surety*.

1. It is supposed that there was *another Testament* which God had made with his people. This the apostle supposeth in the whole context; and he at length brings the discourse to its issue in the eighth chapter, where he expressly compares the two Testaments.

2. It is supposed that this was a *good Testament*. It had an impression of the wisdom and goodness of God; was instructive in the nature and demerit of sin; directed to, and represented, the only means of deliverance by righteousness and salvation in Christ; and it established a worship which was very glorious and acceptable during its appointed season. But, as we shall shew afterwards, it came short in all real excellences of this whereof Christ is the surety;

3. It is supposed that it had a *surety*. For this New Testament having a *surety*, the other must have one too. Some would have our Lord Jesus Christ to be the surety of that Testament also. For our apostle affirms in general, "There is one God and *one Mediator* between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time;" 1 Tim. ii, 5, 6. But there is some difference between a *Mediator* at large, and such a Mediator as is withal a *surety*. And however, on some account, Christ may be said to be the "Mediator" of that covenant, he cannot be said to be the "surety" of it. Be-

sides, the text just cited cannot intend the *old covenant*, but is exclusive of it. The Lord Jesus Christ is there called a "*Mediator*," with respect to the *ransom* that he paid in his death. Again; the Lord Christ was indeed in his divine person the *immediate administrator* of that covenant, the angel or messenger of it "on the behalf of God the Father;" but this doth not constitute him a *Mediator* properly; for a "*Mediator* is not of one, but God is one." Wherefore the Lord Christ was a "*Mediator under that covenant*," as to the original promise of grace, and its efficacy; but he was not the "*Mediator and surety of it*" as it was a *covenant*: for had he been so, he being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that covenant could never have been disannulled.

Some assert *Moses* to have been the surety of the Old Testament. For it is said, that the law was given by the disposition of angels "in the hand of a *Mediator*," Gal. iii, 19, that is, of *Moses*; whom the people desired to be the *internuncius* between God and them, Exod. xx, 19; Deut. v, 24; xviii, 16; *Moses* indeed may be said to be the "*Mediator*" of the old covenant in a general sense, inasmuch as he went *between God and the people*, to declare the will of God to them, and to return their profession of obedience to God; but he was in no sense the *surety* of it. For, on the one side, God did not appoint him in his stead to give assurance of his fidelity to the people. This he took absolutely to himself, wherewith all his laws were prefaced; "I am the Lord thy God." Nor did he, nay, he could not, on the other side, undertake to God for the people; and so could not be esteemed in any sense the "*surety*" of the covenant. Besides, the apostle hath no such argument in hand, as to compare Christ with *Moses*. Wherefore, it was the *high priest* alone

who was the *surety* of that covenant. It was made and confirmed by *sacrifices*, Psal. 1, 5. And if Moses was concerned herein, it was as he executed the office of *priest* in an extraordinary manner. Therefore the high priest, offering solemn sacrifices in the name and on the behalf of the people, making atonement for them according to the terms of that covenant, supplied the place of the surety of it.

§7. In what is positively asserted in the words we must take notice of the person spoken of—"Jesus." Two things were in question among the Hebrews:—what was the nature of the Messiah's office? and—who was the person? as to the first of these, he proves to them from their own acknowledged principles, that he was to be *priest*, as also what was the *nature* of that priesthood, and what would be the necessary *consequence* of setting it up. Now he asserts the second part of the difference, *viz.* that this priest was "Jesus:" because in him alone all things that were to be in that priest properly and completely concur; and also that he had now discharged the principal part of that office.

It was sufficient in the Jewish church to believe in the *Messiah*, and to own the work of redemption which he was to accomplish. Nor did the *mere actual coming* of Christ make it absolutely necessary that they should immediately be obliged to believe him to be the person. Many there were, I doubt not, who, though they died after his incarnation, went to heaven without any actual belief that it was he who was their Redeemer. But their obligations to faith towards that individual person arose from the *declaration* that was made of him, and the *evidences* given to prove him to be the Son of God, the Savior of the world. So he tells those to whom he preached, and who saw his

miracles; "If ye believe not that I AM HE, ye shall die in your sins," John viii, 24. It would not *now* suffice for them to believe in the "*Messiah* in general," but they were also to believe, that *Jesus was he*, or they must perish for their unbelief. Howbeit, they only were intended who, hearing his words and seeing his miracles, had *sufficient evidence* of his being the Son of God. Wherefore the apostles immediately upon the coming of the Holy Ghost, made this the first and principal subject of their preaching—that *Jesus was the Christ*; see Acts ii, 5. What is affirmed of him is, that (γένοιτο) "*he was made so*;" and it signifies what is expressed by it in chap. v, 5.

§. It is affirmed that he was thus constituted a surety (ὑπερβολος διαθήκης) of a *better covenant*. In this word the apostle takes many things as granted among the Hebrews; as,

1. That there *was to be another covenant*, or Testament of God towards the church, besides that which he made with Israel when he brought them out of Egypt. The promises of which are so frequently repeated in the prophets, especially the latter ones, that there could be no question about it, and of which they could not be ignorant.

2. That this new covenant or Testament, should be *better than the former*, which was to be disannulled thereby. This carried along with it its own evidence. For after God in his wisdom and goodness had made one covenant with his people, he would not remove it by another, unless that other were *better* than it. Especially declaring so often as he doth, that he granted them this new covenant as the highest effect of his *grace and kindness* towards them.

3. It is supposed that this better covenant must have a *surety*. The original covenant that God made with

Adam had none, and therefore was it quickly broken and disannulled. The special covenant made with *Israel* had no surety properly so called; only therein the high priest represented what was to be done by him who should undertake to be such a surety.

§9. (*Εγὼς* or *εγὼνότης*) *A surety*, is one that undertaketh for another wherein he is *defective*, really or in reputation. Whatever that undertaking be, whether in words of promise, or in depositing a real security in the hands of an arbitrator, or by any other personal engagement of life and body, it respects the *defect* of the person for whom any one becomes a surety. Such an one is *sponsor* or *fidejussor* in all good authors and common use of speech. And if any one be of absolute credit himself, and of a reputation very unquestionable, there is no need of a surety, unless in case of mortality. The words of a surety in the behalf of another, whose ability or reputation is dubious, are (*ad me recipio, faciet aut faciam*,) "I take the matter upon me, he shall do it or I will." God therefore can have *no surety* properly, because there can be no conceivable *defect* on his part. There may be indeed a question, whether any words or promise be *his*; but to assure us of that is not the work of a surety, but of *any means* whatever that may give *evidence* that it is so. But upon a supposition that what is proposed, is *his* word or promise, there cannot be the most distant fear of any defect on his part, so as that there should be any need of a surety for the performance of it. He doth indeed make use of *witnesses*, to confirm his word; that is, to testify that he hath made such promises; but the difference is wide enough between a *witness* and a *surety*; for the latter must be of *more ability*, or more credit and reputation, than he for whom he engages, or there is no need of his suretiship. This none can

be for God. And if this be not the notion of a surety in this place, the apostle makes use of a word *no* where else used in the whole scripture, to teach us that which it doth never signify among men; which is sufficiently improbable and absurd. For the sole reason why he made use of it was, that from the nature and notion of it among men in other cases, we may understand what he ascribes under that name to the Lord Jesus. Wherefore, seeing the Lord Christ is the surety of the covenant *as a priest*, and all the sacerdotal actings of Christ have God for their *immediate object*, and are performed with him on our behalf, he was *properly* A SURETY FOR US.

§10. It remaineth that we shew *positively how* the Lord Christ was the *surety* of the new covenant, and what is the benefit we receive thereby? And in reply we assert, that he was a surety, (*sponsor*, *vas*, *præ*, *fidejussor*) for us by his voluntary undertaking, out of his rich grace and love, to do, answer, and perform all that is required on our parts, that we may enjoy the benefits of the covenant, the grace and glory prepared, proposed, and promised in it, in the way and manner determined on by divine wisdom. And this may be reduced to two heads:

1. He undertook, as the surety of the covenant, to answer for all the sins of those who are to be made partakers of its benefits; that is, to undergo the *punishment* due to their sins; to make atonement by offering himself a propitiatory sacrifice; redeeming them by the price of his blood from their state of misery and bondage under the law and its curse, Isa. liii, 4—10; Matt. xx, 28; 1 Tim. ii, 6; 1 Cor. vi, 20; Rom. iii, 25, 26; Heb. x, 5—8; Rom. viii, 2, 3; 2 Cor. v, 19—21; Gal. iii, 13, &c.; and this was absolutely necessary, that the grace and glory prepared in the covenant

might be *communicated* to us. Without it the righteousness of God would not permit, that sinners, such as had apostatized from him, despised his authority, and rebelled against his majesty, should again be received into his favor, and made partakers of grace and glory. This therefore the Lord Christ took upon himself as the "surety of the covenant."

2. That those who were to be taken into this covenant should "*receive grace enabling them to comply with the terms of it,*" fulfil its conditions, and yield the obedience which God required therein. For, by the ordination of God, he was to procure for them the Holy Spirit and all needful supplies of grace; to make *these new creatures*; and enable them to yield *obedience* from a *new principle* of spiritual life, faithfully unto the end. So was he the surety of this better covenant.

§11. (II.) From what has been said we may observe:

1. The faith, comfort, honor, and safety of the church depend much upon every particular remark that God hath put on any of the offices of Christ, or whatever belongs thereto.

We have lived to see men endeavoring to the utmost to render Christ himself, and all his offices, of *as little use* in religion as they can possibly admit, and yet retain the name of Christians. And it is to be feared that he is as little valued by some in their *practice*, as he is by others in their *notions*. This is not the way of the scriptures.

2. Nothing was wanting on the part of God that might give eminency, stability, and efficacy to the priesthood of Christ. "Not without an oath." For this was due to the glory of his person; and God saw this was needful to encourage and secure the faith of

the church. There were many things defective in the priesthood under the law, but hereby did he manifest that this dispensation of his will and grace was absolutely unchangeable, so that if we comply not therewith we must perish for ever.

3. Although the decrees and purposes of God were always firm and immutable, yet there was no fixed state of outward dispensations, none "confirmed with an oath," until Christ came.

4. That although God granted great privileges to the church under the Old Testament, yet still in every instance he withheld that which was the principal, and which should have given perfection to what he did grant. He made them priests, but "without an oath." In all there was a reserve for Christ, that he in all things might have the pre-eminence.

5. God by his oath declares the determination of his sovereign pleasure to the object of it. Nothing therefore in the whole legal administration being confirmed by the oath of God, it was always ready for a removal at the appointed season.

6. Christ's being made a priest by the oath of God for ever, is a solid foundation of peace and consolation to the church. For,

7. All the transactions between the Father and the Son concerning his offices, undertakings, and the work of our redemption, have respect to the faith of the church, and are declared for our consolation.

The things which God proposeth to our faith through Christ, are exceeding great and glorious, and such as, being most remote from our *innate apprehensions*, need the highest confirmation. Things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man," 1 Cor. ii, 9. The things of the gospel, pardon of sin, peace with God,

participation of the Spirit, grace and glory, are great and marvellous. Men at the hearing of them are like them that dream; wherefore God discovers the fountains of these things, that we may apprehend the truth and reality of them. If therefore the engagement of infinite wisdom, grace, and power, will not excite, and encourage us to believing, there is no remedy but we must perish in our sins. It may be some, for aught I know, may be carried on in such an easy course, and be so preserved from perplexing temptations, as not to be driven to seek their relief so deep, as are these springs of God's confirmation of the office of Christ by his *oath*. But yet he that doth not of his own choice refresh his faith with the consideration of them, and strengthen it with pleas in his supplications taken from thence, seems to be greatly unacquainted with what it is truly to believe.

§12. Other observations follow:

1. How good and glorious soever any thing may be in the worship of God, or as a way of our coming to him, if it be not ratified by the immediate suretiship of Christ, it must give way to that which is better; it could be neither durable in itself, nor make any thing perfect in them that made use of it.

2. All the privileges, benefits, and advantages of the offices and mediation of Christ, will not avail us, unless we reduce them all to *faith in his person*. Indeed we should be affected, not so much with *what* is done, though that be inconceivably great, as *by whom* it is done,—Jesus the Son of God, God and man in one person.

It is a matter, somewhat of a surprising nature, that divers in these days endeavor to divert the minds and faith of men from a respect to the *person of Christ*. A man could but admire how such an attempt should

have any countenance, but that the crafts of Satan have prevailed so far, that nothing, be it ever so foolish and impious in religion, does now seem strange. For my part I must acknowledge, that I know no more of Christian religion, but what makes me judge, that the principal trouble of believers in this world lies herein, that they can no more *firmly believe* in the PERSON OF CHRIST, than what they have as yet attained to.

3. The whole undertaking of Christ, and the whole efficacy of the discharge of his office, depend on God even the Father.

4. The stability of the new covenant depends on the suretiship of Christ, and is secured to believers thereby. The introduction of a surety in any case is to give stability and security. For it is never done but upon a supposition of some weakness or defect on one account or other. If in any contract, bargain, or agreement, a man be esteemed every way responsible both of ability and fidelity, there is no need of a surety. But yet whereas there is a defect or weakness amongst all men, that they are all mortal and subject to death, in which case neither ability nor fidelity will avail any thing; men in all cases of importance need sureties. These give the utmost confirmation that affairs among men are capable of; so doth the suretiship of Christ on our behalf in this covenant. The first covenant as made with Adam, had no surety, for there was no sin to be satisfied for. But as the Lord Christ upon his undertaking the whole work of mediation became an *immediate head* to the angels that sinned not, whereby they received their establishment and security from any future defection; so *might* be have been such a head to man in innocency. No created nature was unchangeable in its condition, merely

on its root of creation. As some of the angels fell at first, forsaking their habitation, falling from the principle of obedience which had no other root but in themselves; so all the rest might afterwards have in like manner apostatized from their own *innate stability*, had they not been gathered up in the new head of the creation—the *Son of God* as mediator; receiving thence a new relation and establishment. So it might have been with man in innocency; but God in his infinite sovereign wisdom saw it not meet that it should be so. Man shall be left to the exercise of that ability of living to God, which he had received in his creation, and which was sufficient; yet all was lost for want of a *surety*. And this abundantly testifies the pre-eminence of Christ in all things. For Adam, with all the innumerable advantages he had, that is, all helps necessary in himself, and no opposition or difficulty from himself to conflict with, utterly broke the original covenant. But believers who have very little strength in themselves, and have a powerful inbred opposition to their stability, are yet secured in their station by the interposition of their Divine sponsor. Farther: we need a *surety*, because in the state and condition of sin we are not *capable* of immediate dealing or covenanting with God. It could not be on account of God's *holiness* and glorious greatness, that there should be any new covenant at all between God and sinners, without the interposition of a *surety*. Nor did it become the infinite *wisdom* of God, after man had broken and disannulled the covenant made with him in innocency, to enter into a new covenant with him in his fallen condition, without an immediate *undertaker*, that it should be assuredly kept and the ends of it attained. If you have lent a man a *thousand pounds* upon his own security, when his circumstan-

ces were good, and he hath not only failed in his payment, but contracted other debts innumerable, will you lend him *ten thousand pounds* on the same security, expecting to receive it again? Wherefore, God knowing our inability, laid help upon one that is mighty, he exalted one chosen from among the people, Ps. lxxxix, 19. He committed this work to Jesus Christ, and then said concerning us, "now deliver them, for I have found a ransom."

5. That the Lord Jesus Christ undertaking to be our surety, confers the highest obligation to all duties of obedience according to the covenant. For he hath undertaken for us, that we shall *yield* to God this *covenant obedience*, and said, "Surely they are children that will not lie." He is no believer who understands not somewhat of the force and power of this obligation.

VERSES 23, 24.

And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

§1. Design of the words. §2. (I.) Their exposition. The Jewish high priests numerous, by reason of death. §3. Christ's priesthood perpetual, because he continueth ever. §4. (II.) Observations. On the succession of the former priesthood, §5, and the perpetuity of Christ.

§1. **T**HE apostle in these words proceedeth to his *last argument* from the consideration of the priesthood of Christ, as represented by that of Melchisedec. And his intention is still to prove the excellency of it above the Levitical, and of his person above theirs. And in particular he makes it manifest, that the "bringing in of this better hope" did perfect all things, which the law could not do.

The words therefore contain in general—The state and condition of the Levitical priests by reason of their mortality, ver. 23; and—The state and condition of the priesthood of Christ on account of his glorious immortality, ver. 24.

§2. (I.) “And they truly were many priests;” (*οὐ μὲν*) “and they *truly*.” He doth not so much assert a thing that was dubious, as positively declare what was well known. What he affirms of them is, that they were “many priests;” there were *many made priests*, or executed the office of the priesthood. It is of the high priests only, Aaron and his successors, of whom he speaks. There could not be *by the law* any more than one at the time; and his argument proceeds upon only the Divine appointment. From Aaron, the first of them, to Phineas, who was destroyed with the temple, there were inclusively *fourscore and three* high priests. Of these *thirteen* lived under the tabernacle, *eighteen* under the first temple to its destruction by the Babylonians, and all the rest lived under the second temple, which yet stood no longer than the first. And the multiplication of high priests under the second temple, the Jews look upon as a token of God’s displeasure: for “because of the sins of a nation, their rulers are many.”

Whatever advantages there may be in an orderly succession, yet it is absolutely an evidence of *imperfection*. And by the appointment of this order God signified an imperfection in that church state. Succession indeed was a relief against death, yet it was *but a relief*, and therefore supposed a want and weakness. Under the gospel it is not so.

The reason of this multiplication of priests was, “because they were not suffered to continue by reason

of death." Death "suffered them not to continue" in the execution of their office. It *forbad them*, in the name of the great sovereign Lord of life and death; and hereof an instance was given in Aaron, the first of them. God, to show the nature of this priesthood to the people, and to manifest that the everlasting priest was not yet come, commanded Aaron to die "in the sight of all the congregation," Numb. xx, 25—28. It is not surely without some special design that the apostle thus expresseth their dying; "they were by death prohibited to continue." They were seized upon by death, whether they would or no, when it may be they would have earnestly desired to continue, and the people would also have rejoiced in it. Death came on them, neither desired nor expected, with his prohibition. It kept them under its power, so that they could never more attend to their office.

§3. "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath "an unchangeable priesthood. (*ὁ δὲ*) *but this*; we render it, *this man*, not improperly; he was the mediator between God and man, "the man Christ Jesus." Nor doth the calling of him "*this man*," exclude his divine nature; for he was truly a man, though God and man in one person.—"Hath an unchangeable priesthood;" the ground and reason whereof is, "because he continueth ever."

The sole reason here insisted on by the apostle, why the Levitical priests were many, is, because they were forbidden by death to continue. It is sufficient therefore, on the contrary, to prove the perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ that he abideth for ever.

This was the faith of the Jews concerning the Messiah and his office. We have heard, say they, out of the law, (*ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς μένει εἰς τὸ αἰῶνα*, John xii, 34,) "that Christ abideth for ever;" whereon they could

not understand what he told them about his being "lifted up by death." And so the word ($\mu\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota$) signifieth to *abide*, to continue in any state or condition, John xxi, 22, 23. And this was what he was principally typified in by Melchisedec, concerning whom there is no record, as to the beginning of days or end of life, but, as to the *scripture description* of him, he is said to "*abide a priest for ever.*"

It may be said, in opposition to this, that Christ *died* also: true; yet he was not forbid by death to abide by his office as they were. He died *as a priest*, they died *from being priests*. He died as a priest because he was also to be a *sacrifice*; but he continued not only vested with his office, but in the execution of it, even in the state of death. Through the indissolubleness of his person, his soul and body still subsisting in the person of the Son of God, he was a capable subject for his office; and his being in the *state of the dead*, belonged to the administration of his *office* no less than his death itself. So that from the first moment of his being a priest he *abode so always*, without interruption or intermission. This is the meaning of the passage, ($\delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\ \mu\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$) "he in his own person abideth." Nor doth the apostle say, that he did not die, but only that he *abideth always*. It followeth from hence, that he hath ($\iota\epsilon\theta\omicron\sigma\upsilon\nu\eta\ \pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\alpha\lambda\omicron\varsigma$) an *unchangeable priesthood*, a priesthood that doth not pass from one to another; which the apostle directly intends, as is evident from the antithesis. The priests after the order of Aaron were *many*, by reason of *death*; wherefore it was necessary that their priesthood should pass from one to another by succession: but Christ, as he received his priesthood from none, so he hath none to succeed him.

The expositors of the Roman church are greatly perplexed in reconciling this passage with the present priesthood of their church; and well they may, seeing they are undoubtedly irreconcilable.

§4. (II.) From the number and succession of the Levitical priests observe,

1. God will not fail to provide instruments for the work he hath to accomplish. If many priests be needful, many the church shall have.

2. There is such a necessity of the continual administration of the sacerdotal office in behalf of the church, that the interruption of it by the death of the priests was an argument of the weakness of that priesthood.

The high priest is the sponsor and mediator of the covenant; wherefore all covenant transactions between God and the church must be through him: he is to offer up all sacrifices, and therein represent all our prayers. And it is evident from thence, what a ruin it would be to the church to be without an high priest one moment.

§5. On the perpetuity and unchangeableness of Christ's priesthood observe,

1. The perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ depends on his own perpetual life.

2. The perpetuity of Christ's priesthood as unchangeably exercised in his own person, is a principal part of the glory of that office. Hereon depends the church *preservation* and stability. And his "abiding for ever," manifests the continuance of the same care and love for us that he ever had. The same love wherewith, as our high priest, he laid down his life for us, still continues in him; and every one may with the same confidence, go to him now as poor diseased persons went to him when he was upon earth—be-

sides, hereon depends the union and *communion* of the church with itself in all successive generations. The prayers of the church from first to last are lodged in the hand of the same high priest, who abides for ever. He returns the prayers of one generation to another; we enjoy the fruits of the prayers, obedience, and blood of those that went before us; and if we are faithful in our generation, serving the will of God, those who come after shall enjoy the fruits of ours. Our joint interest in this our abiding priest gives, as it were, a line of communication to all believers in all generations: moreover, the *consolation* of the church depends on Christ's unchangeable priesthood. Do we meet with troubles, trials, difficulties, temptations, and distresses; hath not the church done so in former ages? What do we think of those days wherein prisons, tortures, swords, and flames were the portion of the church all the world over? But did any of them miscarry? Was any true believers lost for ever? And did not the whole church prove victorious in the end? Did not Satan rage, and the world gnash their teeth, to see themselves conquered, and their power broken, by the faith, patience, and sufferings of them whom they hated and despised? And was it from their *own* wisdom and courage that they were so preserved? Did they overcome merely by their own blood, or were they delivered by their own power? No, but all their preservation and success, their deliverance and eternal salvation, depended merely on the care and power of their merciful High Priest. It was through his blood, the "blood of the Lamb," or the efficacy of his sacrifice, that they overcame their adversaries, Rev. xii, 11. By the same blood were their "robes washed and made white," chap. vii, 14. Is he not the same that he ever was, vested with the same office? and hath he.

not the same qualifications of love, compassion, care, and power for the discharge of it, as he always had? Whence then can any just cause of despondency in any trials or temptations arise? We have the same high priest to take care of us, to assist and help us, as they had, who were all finally victorious.

3. The addition of *sacrificing priests*, as vicars of Christ in the discharge of his office, destroys his priesthood as to the principal eminency of it above the Levitical.

VERSE 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

§1. The apostle's design, and the subject stated. §2. (I.) The note of inference. §3. (II.) Christ's ability. §4. (III.) As the effect of that power, he is able to save, §5. to the uttermost, §6. those who come to God, §7. by him. §8. (IV.) The special reason of this efficacious power. §9. First, he lives for ever. §10. Secondly, he acts with God for us; he intercedes. §11. Thirdly, the connexion between the mediatory life of Christ, and his intercession. §12—16. (V.) Observations.

§1. **I**N this verse the apostle brings his whole preceding mysterious discourse to an issue, in the application of it to the faith and comfort of the church. It was not his design merely to open mysterious truths in the *notion* of them, but to demonstrate the spiritual and eternal advantages of all true believers by these things.

There are in the words,—A note of inference, *for* he is, &c.—An ascription of *power* to this High Priest, “he is able.”—The *end* or effect of that power, “to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him.” And—The reason of the whole, “because he ever liveth to make intercession for them;” his perpetual life and his perpetual work.

§2. (I.) The note of inference (*ὁθεν*) *wherefore*, may respect the whole foregoing discourse, as asserting that which necessarily follows thereon; or it may have respect only to the ensuing clause in this verse, as if the apostle had only pretended in particular, that the Lord Christ is able to save to the uttermost, "*because* he ever abideth:" but he rather seems to make an inference from the *whole foregoing discourse*, and the close of the verse is only an addition of the way and manner how the Lord Christ accomplisheth what is ascribed to him by virtue of his office. Being such an High Priest as we have evidenced him to be, "*made by an oath*," and, "*abiding for ever*," he is able to save.

§3. (II.) That which is inferred to be in this priest, is, power and ability; (*δυναται*) *he is able*; he can. It is not an ability of *nature*, but of *office*, that is intended. Hence doth our apostle press his ability—not absolutely, but—as the High Priest of the church; as if a man who is mighty in wealth, riches, and power be also made a judge; it is one thing what he can do by his might and power, another what he can do as a judge; and he who hath to do with him as a judge, is to consider only what he is able for in the discharge of that office. This is the ability here intended; not an absolute divine power inherent in the person of Christ, but a *moral power*, a (*jus*) *right*, and what can be effected in the just discharge of this office.

§4. (III.) As the effect of that power it is added, "*He is able to save*," (*καὶ σωζειν*) *even to save, to save also*; not for this or that particular end, but *absolutely*, "*even to save*." Not any temporal deliverance, but that which is supernatural, spiritual, and eternal, is intended.

1. The word includeth in it a supposition of some *evil* or danger we are delivered from. Wherefore it is

said of Christ, that he "saves his people from their *sins*," Matt. i, 21; from the *curse*, Gal. iii, 13; and from the *wrath to come*, 1 Thes. i, 10.

2. The bringing of us into an estate of present grace, and right to future blessedness, with the enjoyment of it in its appointed season, is intended in it. For although this be not included in the first notion of the word, yet it belongs to the nature of the thing intended. This salvation, called therefore "great" and "eternal," doth not merely respect the evil we are delivered from, but the contrary good also in the present favor and future enjoyment of God. There is therefore no small *ability* required to this work. It was no *easy* thing to take away sin, to subdue Satan, to fulfil the law, to make peace with God, to procure pardon, grace, and glory.

§5. He is able to save also (εις το παντελες) "*to the uttermost*." The word may have a double sense; for it may respect the *perfection* of the work, or its *duration*; and so it is variously rendered.

Take it in the *former* sense, and the meaning is, that he will not do one thing or another that belongs to it, and leave what remains to ourselves or others; but he is our rock, and his work is perfect. In the *latter* sense, (as the *Syriac* version has it) two things may be intended:

1. That after an entrance is made into this work, and men begin to be made partakers of deliverance thereby, there may be great opposition made against it in temptations, trials, sins, and death, before it be brought to perfection: but our Lord Christ, as our faithful High Priest, fainteth not in his work, but is able to carry us through all these difficulties, and will do so until it be finished *for ever* in heaven. ,

2. That this salvation is durable, perpetual, eternal, Isa. xlv, 17. But nothing hinders us to take the words in such a comprehensive sense, as to include the meaning of *both* these interpretations. He is able to save completely, as to all parts; fully, as to all causes; and for ever in duration.

§6. The whole is farther declared by instancing in those who are to be saved or made partakers of this salvation. He is able to save to the uttermost all those; and only those, "who come to God by him."

To "come to God" hath a double sense in the scripture; for it is sometimes expressive of *faith*, sometimes of *worship*. The *latter* sense is principally here intended; for the apostle's discourse is concerning the state of the church under the New Testament, with the advantage of it above that of the Old, by its relation to the priesthood of Christ. They of old "came to God" in their worship by the high priest of the law; but those high priests could not *save* them in any sense. But the High Priest of the New Testament can "save to the utmost" all *gospel worshippers*, "all that come to God by him." But the *former* sense of the word is also included and supported.

§7. (*Δι' αὐτοῦ*) *by him*, as an high priest, chap. x, 19—21, 22. Now to "come to God *by Jesus Christ*" in all holy worship, so as to be interested in his saving power as the High Priest of the church, is—so to come, in *obedience* to his *authority*, as to the way and manner of it; with *affiance* to his *mediation*, as to the acceptance of it; with *faith* in his *person*, as the foundation of it. It is not by legal institutions, much less by our own inventions, but by his own appointment, Matt. xxvii, 20; to come to God any other way, gives us no interest in the care or saving power of Christ, John xv, 7, 8. Faith hath respect to two things:—the

sacrifice he hath offered, and—his *intercession*, whereby he procures actual acceptance for our persons and our duties, Heb. v, 16; 1 John ii, 2. The foundation of the whole is *faith in his person* as vested with his holy office, and in the discharge of it.

§8. (IV.) The close of this verse gives us the special reason and confirmation of all the efficacy that the apostle hath assigned to the priesthood of Christ: "Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And three things must be considered in these words:

First, The state and condition of Christ as an high priest. "He liveth always," or for ever.

Secondly, What he doth as an high priest in that state and condition: "He maketh intercession for us."

Thirdly, The connexion of these things, or the relation of the work of Christ to his state and condition; the one is the end of the other; "He lives for ever to make intercession for us."

§9. First as to his state and condition, "He lives for ever." He is always living. The Lord Jesus Christ in his divine person hath a threefold life in heaven. The one he lives *in himself*: the other *for himself*, and the last *for us*.

The eternal *life of God* in his divine nature. This he liveth in himself. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," John v, 26. And he that he hath life in himself, a life independent on any other, he is the *living one*, the *living God*. No *creature* can have "life in himself;" for *in God* all creatures live, move, and have their being; he is hereby "Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and the end of all," Rev. i, 11; because he is (*ὁ ζων*) "the living one," ver. 18.

2. There is a life which he liveth *for himself*, viz. a life of inconceivable glory in his human nature. He led a life, in this world, obnoxious to misery and death, and died accordingly. This life is now changed into that of immortal eternal glory. "Henceforth he dieth no more, death hath no more power over him," This life is attended with *ineffable glory* which he now enjoys in heaven; he lives it for himself; it is his reward, the "glory and honor" with which he is crowned.

3. A *mediatory life*, a life *for us*. So saith our apostle, "he was made a priest after the power of an endless life." He lives as king, prophet, and priest of the church. So he describes himself, Rev. i, 18, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death." As he *died* for us, so he *liveth* for us; and is entrusted with all power over the church's adversaries, for its good.

§10. *Secondly*, By virtue of this life he *acts with God* in behalf of the church. "He lives for ever to make intercession for them." Now this expression containing the whole of what the Lord Jesus Christ, as the high priest of the church, doth now with God for them, and whereon the certainty of our salvation depends, it must with some diligence be inquired into.

The *Socinian* figment about the nature of the intercession of Christ is of no consideration. For by a strange violence offered to the nature of things, and the signification of words, they contend, that this *intercession* is nothing but the "power of Christ to *communicate* actually "all good things," the whole effect of this mediation to believers. That Christ hath such a power is no way questioned; but that the exercise of this power is his *intercession*, is a most fond imagination.

That which casts them on this absurd conception of things, is their hatred of the *priestly office* of Christ as exercised *towards God* on our behalf. But I have elsewhere sufficiently disputed against this fiction.

The intercession of Christ was under the Old Testament typified three ways:—by the living fire that was continually on the altar;—by the *daily sacrifice* of morning and evening for the whole people; and—by the *incense* that was burned in the sanctuary; and this was of two sorts,

1. That wherewith the high priest entered *once a year* into the most holy place on the day of expiation. For he might not enter in, yea, he was to die if he did, unless in his entrance he filled the place and covered the ark and mercy seat with a cloud of incense, Lev. xvi, 12, 13, which incense was to be *fired* with burning coals from the altar of burnt offerings; so did our High Priest. He *filled heaven* at his entrance with the sweet savor of his intercession, *kindled* with the coals of that eternal fire, wherewith he offered himself to God.

2. The incense that was burned *every day* in the sanctuary by the priests in their courses. This represented *prayer*, Psal. cxli, 2, and was always accompanied with it, Luke i, 9, 10. This also was a type of the *continual efficacy* of the intercession of Christ, Rev. viii, 4, and as the fire on the altar kindled all the renewed sacrifices, which were to be repeated and multiplied because of their weakness and imperfection; so doth the intercession of Christ make effectual the one perfect sacrifice which he offered once for all, the *various applications* of it to the consciences of believers, Heb. x, 2.

The *actual intercession* of Christ in heaven, as the second act of his sacerdotal office, is a fundamental article. Wherefore whatever apprehensions we may

attain of the manner of it, the thing itself is the centre of our faith, hope, and consolation.

It is no way unbecoming the human nature of Christ, even in its glorious exaltation, to pray to God; for, however exalted and glorified, it is *human* nature still subsisting in dependence upon God and subjection to him. Hence God gives him new revelations now in his glorified condition, Rev. i, 5; Psal. ii, 8. "Ask of me" respects his state of exaltation at the right hand of God, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, Rom. i, 4, and the incense which he offereth with the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii, 3, 4, is no other but his own intercession, whereby their prayers are made acceptable to God.

This praying of Christ at present is no other but such as may become *him* who "sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." There must therefore needs be a great difference as to the outward manner of his present intercession in heaven, and his praying whilst on earth, especially at some seasons. For being encompassed here with temptations and difficulties, he cast himself before God with strong cries, tears, and supplications, chap. v, 7; this would not become his present glorious state. His sufferings were as the breaking and bruising of those spices which he had before prepared, John xvii, wherein all his graces had their most fervent exercises, as spices yield their strongest savor under their bruising. At his entrance into the holy place this incense was fired with coals from the altar; that is, the efficacy of his oblation, wherein he had offered himself to God, through the eternal Spirit, rendered his prayer as incense covering the ark and mercy seat, and procuring the fruits of the atonement.

It must be granted that there is no need of *words* in the immediate presence of God. He needs not our words whilst we are on earth, all things are open and naked before him; though we need the use of them for many reasons. But the glorious presence of God, when we shall behold him as Christ doth, in the most eminent manner face to face, it cannot be understood what need or use we can have of *words* to express ourselves to God in prayer or praises. Besides the souls of men in their separate state, can have no use of voice or words, yet are they said to cry and pray with a loud voice; because they do so virtually and effectually, Rev. vi, 9, 10. However I will not determine what outward transactions are necessary to the glory of God in this matter before the angels and saints about his throne. It is certain, however, that there is yet a church state in heaven with which we have communion, chap. xii, 22—24, but what solemn, outward, and as it were visible transactions of worship are required thereto, we know not. Somewhat there is, we may infer, which shall not be any more after the day of judgment, 1 Cor. xv, 26—28.

It must be granted that the virtue and prevalency of Christ's intercession depends upon, and flows from, his oblation and sacrifice: this we are plainly taught from the ancient types. Wherefore the safest conception of it we can have, as to the *manner* in general, is Christ's *continual appearance for us in the presence of God* by virtue of his office, as High Priest over the house of God, *representing the efficacy of his oblation*; accompanied with tender *care, love, and desires* for the welfare, supply, deliverance, and salvation of the church. "If any man sin we have an advocate," &c. but what belongs to the *particular manner* of transacting these things in heaven, I know not.

§11. *Thirdly*, We must consider the connexion of the two things mentioned, or their relation one to another, namely, the *perpetual life* of Christ and his *intercession*: "He lives for ever to make intercession." His intercession is the principal end of his mediatory life. He lives to rule his church; he lives to subdue his enemies; (for he must reign until they are all made his footstool;) he lives to give his Holy Spirit in all his blessed effects to believers. But though all these things proceed originally by an emanation of power and grace from God, yet because they are given to Christ upon his *intercession*, that may well be esteemed the principal end of his mediatory life. This intercession of Christ is the great ordinance of God, for the exercise of his power, and the communication of his grace to the church, to his eternal praise and glory. So doth our High Priest live to make intercession for us.

§12. (V.) From the whole we are furnished with a few observations:

1. Considerations of the person and offices of Christ ought to be improved to the strengthening of faith, and increase of the church's consolation. So they are here by the apostle after the great and ample declaration hath he made of the excellency of his priestly office with respect to his person, he applies all to the encouragement of the faith and hope of such as endeavor to "go to God by him."

2. And hereon, the consideration of the office and power of Christ is of great use to the faith of the church. It was owing to his infinite condescension that he undertook the office of a mediator between God and man; yet having undertaken it, all the actings of it are circumscribed and limited by that office. We have no ground of faith to expect any thing from him

but what *belongs to the office* he hath undertaken. We can look for no more from a king but what he can do justly *as a king*. Yet the principal reason of the all-sufficiency of his office, power, and ability is taken from his own *person*, which alone was capable of such a trust; he alone, who was God and man in one person, was capable of being such a king, priest, and prophet, as was able to "save the church to the uttermost."

§13. From what has been said we may farther observe,

1. It is good to secure this first ground of evangelical faith, that the Lord Christ, as vested with his offices, and their exercise, is able to save us. When persons are reduced to look for salvation *only by Christ*, and apprehend in general that he can save sinners, yet, oftentimes when they come to inquire into the way and manner of it, in the exercise of his priestly office, they cannot close with it. Thus disappointed, away they turn again into themselves; and if they are not recovered from this fatal mistake, they must die in their sins. Unless therefore we do well and distinctly fix this foundation of faith, that "*Christ as a priest* is able to save us," we shall never make one firm step in our progress. Wherefore we are to look to this priesthood of Christ, as what Divine Wisdom hath appointed to be the only way whereby we may be saved. The way proposed in it to save sinners by the *cross of Christ*, is accounted as *folly* by all unbelievers, whatever else they pretend as the reason of their unbelief. But this *faith* is to fix upon;—that although we yet see not *how* it may be done, yet this being the way which *Infinite Wisdom* hath fixed on, there is no defect in it; but Christ by it is "able to save us." For the very first notion which we have of wis-

dom, as divine and infinite, is, that we are to *acquiesce* in its contrivances and determinations, though we cannot *comprehend* the reasons or ways of them. Besides, the Lord Christ is herein also the *power* of God. This is the way whereby Infinite Wisdom hath chosen to act omnipotent power.

2. Whatever hindrances and difficulties lie in the way of the salvation of believers, whatever oppositions rise against it, Christ is able, by virtue of his sacerdotal office, to carry the work through them all to eternal perfection.

3. The salvation of all sincere gospel worshippers is secured by the actings of the Lord Jesus Christ in the discharge of his priestly office. But yet, attendance to the worship of God in the gospel, is required to interest us in the saving care and power of our High Priest. Men deceive themselves who look to be saved by him, but take no care to come to God in holy *worship* by him.

4. Those who endeavor to come to God any other way but by Christ, as by saints and angels, may do well to consider, whether they have any such office in heaven as by virtue of which they are able to "save them to the uttermost." If they can do so without any office, they can do more than Jesus Christ himself could do; for he is able to do it only by virtue of his office. If they do it by virtue of any office committed to them, let it be named what it is. Are they *priests* in heaven for ever after the order of Melchisedec? Or are they the kings or prophets of the church? Under what name or title is this power entrusted with them? Such imaginations are most foreign from true Christian religion. An holy, painful minister on the earth can do much more towards the saving of the souls of men, than any saint or angel in heaven. Yes,

there is more love, pity, and compassion in Christ Jesus towards every poor sinner that comes to God by him, than all the saints in heaven are able to *comprehend*! And if kindred or alliance may be of consideration in this matter, he is more nearly related to us, than father or mother, or wife or children, or altogether, we being not only bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, but so joined to him, as to be one spirit with him. He is an unbeliever, to whom the glorious exaltation of the Lord Christ is a discouragement from going to him, or by him to God on the throne of grace. For all the glory, power, and majesty of Christ in heaven is proposed to believers, to *encourage* them to come to him, and put their trust in him.

§14. *Obs.* It is a matter of strong consolation to the church, that Christ lives in heaven for us. It is a spring of unspeakable joy to all true believers, that Christ lives a life of immortality and glory even for *himself*. Who can call to mind all the miseries which he underwent in this world, all the reproach and scorn that was cast upon him by his enemies of all sorts, all that the wrath of the whole world is yet filled with against him, but is refreshed, rejoiced, transported, with a spiritual view by faith of all that majesty and glory, which he is now in the eternal possession of? So was it with Stephen, Acts vii, 56. And therefore in all the representations he hath made of himself since his ascension into heaven, he hath manifested his *present glory*, Acts xxvi, 13; Rev. i, 14—18. And the due consideration hereof cannot but be a matter of unspeakable refreshment to all that love him in sincerity.

But herein lieth the life of the church's *consolation*, that he continues to live a *mediatory* life in heaven for us also. It is not, I fear, so considered, nor so

improved, as it ought to be. That Christ died for us, all who own the gospel profess in words; though some so explain their faith or rather their infidelity, as to deny its proper use and evacuate its proper ends. What most men regard in this matter is, that Christ now lives a life of glory in heaven for *himself alone*. But the text speaks quite the contrary: "He lives for ever to make *intercession* for us." And it deserves peculiar notice, that he lives for ever to send the *Holy Spirit* to his disciples. Without this constant effect of the mediatory life of Christ, the very being of the church would fail. Did he not live this life for us in heaven, neither the whole church, nor any one member of it, could be preserved one moment from utter ruin. But hereby are all their adversaries continually disappointed.

§15. *Obs.* So great and glorious is the work of saving believers to the utmost, that it is necessary the Lord Redeemer should lead a mediatory life in heaven; for the perfecting of it. "He lives for ever to make intercession for us." It is generally acknowledged that sinners could not be saved without the *death* of Christ; but that they could not be saved without his *life* following it, is not so much considered. See Rom. v, 10; chap. viii, 34, 35, &c. It is thought by some, probably, that when he had declared the name of God, and revealed the whole counsel of his will, when he had given us the great example of love and holiness in his life; when he had fulfilled all righteousness, redeemed us by his blood, and made atonement for our sins by the oblation of himself; confirming the truth he taught, and his acceptance with God in all by his resurrection from the dead, wherein he was "declared to be the Son of God with power;"—that he might have now left us to manage for ourselves, and to build

our eternal safety on the foundation he had laid. But, alas! when all this was done, if he had only ascended into his *own* glory, to enjoy his majesty, honor, and dominion, without continuing his life and office on *our behalf*, we had been left miserably poor and helpless; so that both we and all our right to an heavenly inheritance, should have been made a prey to every subtle and powerful adversary. He could therefore no otherwise comfort his disciples, when he was leaving this world, but by promising that he would not leave them *orphans* (*ορφανος*, John xiv, 18;) that is, he would still continue to act for them, to be their *patron*, and to exercise the office of a mediator and advocate with the Father for them. Without this, he knew they must be "orphans," such as are not able to defend themselves from injuries, nor secure their own right to their inheritance.

§16. *Obs.* The most glorious prospect we can have of the things within the veil, the remaining transactions of the work of our salvation in the most holy place, is in the representation that is made to us of the intercession of Christ.

§17. *Obs.* The intercession of Christ is the great evidence of the continuance of his love and care, his pity and compassion towards his church. Mercy and compassion, love and tenderness, are constantly ascribed to him as our High Priest. See chap. iv, 15; chap. v, 1, 2. So the great exercise of his sacerdotal office in laying down his life for us, and expiating our sins by his blood, is still peculiarly ascribed to his *love*, Gal. ii, 20; Ephes. v, 2; Rev. i, 5.

But how shall we know that the divine Redeemer continues thus tender, loving, and compassionate? What evidence or testimony have we of it? Herein we have an infallible demonstration of it: As our High

Priest (*διναμενος cupnatyrai*) "he is able to suffer," to condole with, to have compassion on his poor tempted ones, chap. iv, 15. All these affections doth he continually exercise in his intercession. It is from a sense of their wants and weaknesses, of their distresses and temptations, of their states and duties, accompanied with inexpressible love and compassion, that he continually intercedes for them;—that their sins may be pardoned, their temptations subdued, their sorrows removed, their trials sanctified, and their persons saved; and doing this continually as an High Priest, he is in the continual exercise of love, care, and compassion.

VERSE 26.

For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

§1. The scope of the words, whence appears the deplorable state of the present Jews. §2, 3. (1.) The words explained. §4—6. The Socinian notion of Christ's priesthood confuted and exposed. §7. (II.) Observations,

§1. **I**N this verse the apostle renders a reason of his whole preceding discourse, and why he laid so great weight upon the description of our High Priest. And he hath in it, probably, a respect to what he last asserted in particular concerning his ability to save them that came to God by him; "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy," &c. There is *supposed* and included in this assertion, that if we intend to come to God, we had need of an High Priest to encourage and enable us for it. And if in particular we need *such* an High Priest, it is supposed that without an High Priest, *in general*, we can do nothing in this matter. This therefore is the foundation which in this argument the apostle proceedeth on; that sinners, as we all

are, can have no access to God but by an High Priest: God had not only by the institution of that office among the Hebrews, declared ~~that~~ this was the way whereby he would be worshipped; but also with legal prohibitions, fortified with severe penalties, he had forbidden all men, the highest, the greatest, the best and most holy, to come to him any other way. And herein lies a great aggravation of the present misery of the Jews. High priests of their own they have none; nor have had for many ages. Hereon all their solemn worship of God utterly ceaseth. They are the only persons in the world, who, if all mankind would give them leave and assist them in it, cannot worship God as they themselves judge they ought to do. For if Jerusalem were restored into their possession, and a temple rebuilt in it more glorious than that of Solomon, yet they could not offer one lamb in sacrifice to God. For they know that this cannot be done without an high priest, and priests who infallibly derive their pedigree from Aaron, of whom they have not amongst them one in all the world. And so must they abide under a sense of being judicially excluded from all solemn worship of God until the veil shall be taken from their hearts, and, leaving Aaron, they return to him who was typified by Melehisedec, to whom even Abraham their father acknowledged his subjection.

§2. "Such an high priest (*εργασαν υμιν*) ~~became us.~~" Respect may be had therein either to the *wisdom* of God, or to our *state* and condition, or to both; such an high priest it was *needful* that we should have. If the *condescency* of the matter, which lies in a contrivance of proper means to an end, be intended, then it is God who is respected in this word; if the *necessity* of the kind or relief mentioned be meant, then it

is ~~we~~ who are respected. Such a one became *us* as could make atonement for our sins, 'purge our consciences from our dead works, procure acceptance with God for us, administer supplies of spiritual grace, give us assurance and consolation in our trials, preserve us by his power, be in a continual readiness to receive us in all our addresses to him, and to bestow upon us eternal life. Unless we have an High Priest that can do all these things for us, we cannot be saved to the uttermost. Such an High Priest we stood in need of, and such an one it became the wisdom and grace of God to give us. And here let us gratefully reflect, that God in infinite wisdom, love, and grace, gave us such an High Priest, as in the qualifications of his person, the glory of his condition, and the discharge of his office, was every way suited to deliver us from the state of apostacy, sin, and misery, and to bring us to himself through a perfect salvation. This the ensuing particulars will fully manifest.

§3. "Such an High Priest became us, as is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." There is some allusion in all these things to what was typically represented in the instituted priesthood under the law. For the high priest was to be a person without blemish, not maimed in any part of his body. He was not to marry any one that was defiled, nor was he to defile himself among the people. In his ministration he wore on his forehead a plate of gold with that inscription; "Holiness to the Lord." But all these things were only outward representations of what was really required in such an high priest as the church stood in need of. The church was taught by them from the beginning that it stood in need of an High Priest whose *real* qualifications should answer all these typical representations of them. It is possible that our apostle, in this

description of our High Priest, designed to obviate the prejudicate opinion of some of the Hebrews, concerning their Messiah; for generally they looked on him as one that was to be a great earthly prince and warrior, that should conquer many nations, and subdue all their enemies with the sword, shedding the blood of men in abundance. In opposition to this vain and pernicious imagination, our Savior testifies unto them, that he came "not to kill, but to save, and to keep alive." And our apostle here gives such a description of him in these *holy gracious qualifications*, as might attest his person and work to be quite of another nature than what they desired or expected. Wherefore we may observe, that all these qualifications of our High Priest were peculiarly necessary on account of the sacrifice which he had to offer. They were not only necessary for him, as he was to be the *sacrificer*, but also as he was to be the *sacrifice*; not only as he was to be the priest, but as he was to be the *lamb*. For the sacrifices were to be without *blemish*, as well as the sacrificer. So were we "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. i, 19.

§4. We must not pass by the wresting of this text by the *Socinians*; nor omit its due vindication. For they contend that this whole description of Christ doth "not respect his internal qualifications in this world before and in the offering of himself by his blood; but his glorious state in heaven." For they fear (as well they may) that if the *qualifications of a priest* were necessary to him, whilst he was in this world, that then he was so indeed. He who says such an High Priest became us as is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, doth affirm that when he was so, he was our High Priest. In *that state*, beyond dispute, wherein

these things were necessary to him, he was a *priest*. To avoid this ruin to their pretensions, they offer violence to the text, and the signification of every word in it, and dangerously insinuate a negation of the things intended, to be in Christ in this world. Their exposition is contrary to the *order* of the apostle's words; for he placeth all these properties as qualifications of his person *antecedently* to his exaltation. He was *first*, holy, harmless, undefiled; and *then* made higher than the heavens. But according to this exposition, his being "made higher than the heavens" is the antecedent cause of his being made holy, &c. It is highly false that the glorious state pretended was antecedent to his being a priest, and the sacrifice which he offered; yea, such a state was inconsistent with the oblation of himself: for he offered himself unto God *in his blood*; Heb. ix, 14; and that "with strong cries and tears," chap. v, 7. Again; their exposition is in express contradiction to their own main hypothesis. For by *sins* they understand *weaknesses* and *infirmities*; and whereas they will not allow Christ to have offered himself before his entrance into the holy place, and make it necessary that he should be antecedently freed from all weaknesses and infirmities, it is the highest contradiction to affirm that he *offered for them*; seeing he could not offer himself until he was delivered from them.

§5. The vanity and falsehood of this novel exposition will be yet farther and more fully evinced in an inquiry into the proper signification of the words themselves; every one of which is wrested to give it countenance.

1. He was to be (*σσιος*) *holy*; (that is, *חַסִּיד* for Acts ii, 22. The Hebrew word, (*חַסִּיד*) is rendered (*τον σσιου σα*) "the holy one;" from Psalm xvi, 10. And the

Lord Jesus Christ is there said to be (*οσιος*) "holy," *antecedent* to his resurrection; which must be with respect to his *internal holiness*; "thou wilt not suffer thine *holy one* to see corruption." And in the New Testament the word is every where used for one internally holy, 1 Tim. ii, 8; Tit. i, 8. Hence from the womb Christ was that (*το αγιον*) *holy thing* of God, Luke i, 35. All others since the fall have a *polluted nature* and are originally unholy; but his conception being miraculous, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost; and his nature filled with all habitual seeds of grace, he was emphatically (*οσιος*) *holy*. And *such* an High Priest as was so *became us*. Had his nature been touched with sin, he had not been meet to be either a priest or sacrifice. This holiness of nature was needful unto him, who was to answer for the *unholiness* of our nature, and to take it away. Unholy sinners stand in need of an holy priest, and an holy sacrifice. What we have not in ourselves we must have in him, or we shall not be accepted with the Holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

2. He was to be (*ακανος*) *free from all evil*, fraud, or sin; the same absolutely with that of the apostle Peter, 1 Epist. ii, 22, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (*Οσιος*) *Holy*, is his epithet with respect to his nature; (*ακανος*), *harmless*, respects his *life*. The first includes all positive holiness; the other an abnegation of all unholiness. Had he not been *innocent*, and every way blameless in himself, he would have had other work to do than always to take care of *our* salvation, as the apostle observes in the next verse. He must first have offered for his *own sins*, as the high priest did of old, before he could have offered for *ours*.

3. He was to be (*αμωβλος*) *undefiled*, unpolluted, that is, morally, with any sin or evil; this the word proper-

ly signifies, and it is not used in the New Testament in any other sense. But wherein does this differ from (*ακακος*) *harmless*? I answer; the one is, he *did no evil in himself*; the other, that he *contracted none from any other*.

4. He was (*κεχωρισμενος απο των αματωλων*) “separate from sinners;” from sinners *as such*, and *in their sins*. He was like unto us in all things, *sin only excepted*. He was *not* separate from them as to *community of nature*, for God sent his own Son in the “likeness of sinful flesh;” Rom. viii, 3; “made of a woman, made under the law,” Gal. iv, 4; “the word was made flesh,” John i, 14; but yet he sent him only in the “*likeness of sinful flesh*,” and that because he “made him sin, who knew no sin,” 2 Cor. v, 21. Again; he was *not* separated from sinners as to the *duties of outward conversation*. He lived not in a wilderness, nor said to the children of men, “Stand off, I am holier than you.” He conversed freely with all sorts of persons, even publicans and harlots, for which he was reproached by the proud hypocritical pharisees. Moreover; he was *not* separate from sinners, in state and condition, as kings and potentates are from persons poor and mean; who therefore out of sense of their own *meanness*, and the other’s dignified state, and perhaps greatness of mind, dare not approach them. No, but as he was meek and lowly, and took up his whole conversation with the lower sort of the people, the poor of this world, so, by all engaging ways and means, he invited and encouraged all sorts of sinners to come unto him. Once more; he is *not* said to be separate from sinners, as though he had ever been in any communication with them, in any thing wherein he was afterwards separated from them. The participle (*κεχωρισμενος*) hath the sense of an *adjective*, declaring

what he is, and not *how* he came to be so. On the whole, it appeareth hence plainly wherein it was that he was separate from sinners; *namely*, whatever he underwent was upon our account and not his own. He was every way, in the perfect holiness of his nature and life, distinguished from all sinners; not only from the greatest, but from those who ever had the least taint of sin, and who otherwise were most holy.

§6. These are the invaluable properties of the human nature of our high priest, and which were necessary *antecedently* to the discharge of any part of his office. His *present state* and condition is in the next place expressed; “and made higher than the heavens;” (υψηλοτερος γενομενος) *made higher*. He was not made higher than the heavens that he *might* be a priest; but being our high priest he was so made, for the discharge of that part of his office which yet remained to be performed. He was so exalted, as to the place of his residence from the earth, above those aspectable heavens, as withal to be placed in honor, dignity, and power above all the inhabitants of heaven, he only excepted, who put all things under him.

§7. (II.) We may observe, from the passage thus explained,

1. Although these properties of our high priest are principally to be considered as rendering him meet to be our high priest, yet are they also to be considered as an *exemplar* of that holiness and innocency, which we ought to be conformable unto. None can more dishonor the Lord Christ, nor more perniciously deceive and betray their own souls, than by confessing him to be their priest and Savior, and yet do not endeavor to be like him.

2. Seeing all these properties were required in Christ, that he might be *our high priest*, he was possessed of

them for *our sakes* and benefit. For such an high priest became us, and such an high priest we have.

3. The infinite grace and wisdom of God are always to be admired by us in providing such an high priest as was every way meet for us, to bring us to himself.

4. The dignity, duty, and safety of the gospel church depend solely on the nature, qualifications, and exaltation of our high priest.

5. If such an high priest *became* us, was needful to us, for the establishment of the new covenant, and the communication of its grace to the church, then all persons, Christ only excepted, are absolutely excluded from all share in *his priesthood*. He that takes upon himself to be a priest under the gospel, must be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; that is, absolutely so; or he is an impostor, who endeavors to deceive the souls of men.

6. If therefore we consider aright what it is that we stand in need of, and what God hath graciously provided for us, that we may be brought to him in his glory, we shall find it our wisdom to forego all other expectations, and to betake ourselves to Christ alone.

VERSE 27.

Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself.

§1, 2. (I.) The words explained. §3. The Socinian exposition particularly confuted. §4. How and what Christ offered for the sins of the people. §5. (II.) Brief Observations upon the whole.

§1. (I.) “**WHO** needeth not daily as those high priests,” (*Οὐκ ἐχει ἀνάγκην*), *he needeth not*; it is not

necessary for him. Other priests being weak, infirm, and sinful, and their offerings being only of earthly things that could never perfectly expiate sin, these things were necessary for them, and so God had ordained, (*ὡς περ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*) "as the high priest," that is, those of the law concerning whom he had treated. *All these priests* had need to offer in the manner here expressed: no sooner was one offering past, but they were making another necessary. And what perfection could be comprised in an everlasting rotation of sins and sacrifices? Is it not manifest that this priesthood and these sacrifices could never of themselves expiate sin, nor make perfect them that came to God by them? Their instructive use was excellent, they both *directed* faith to look to the great future Priest and sacrifice, and established faith in that they were pledges given of God to assure them thereof.

(*Καθ' ἡμέραν*) *daily*, that is, so often as occasion required according to the law; for there is no reason to confine the apostle's intention to the annual expiatory sacrifice; nor is it the (*דְּיוּרִי*) *daily sacrifice* alone that is intended; though that be included also. For that (*juge sacrificium*) *continual sacrifice*, had respect to the sins of the whole church, both priests and people. As we are obliged to pray for the pardon of sin every day, by virtue of that sacrifice, which is (*πρὸς ὄψαλος καὶ ζῶσα*.) "new and living" in its efficacy *continually*, and as occasion requires; so there was an obligation on the priest to offer for himself a sin offering, "as often as he sinned according to the sins of the people," Lev. iv, 3.

§2. (*Θυσίας ἀναφέρειν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν*) "To offer sacrifices for sins." Propitiatory and expiatory sacrifices are intended; but possibly a principal regard is had to

the great *anniversary* sacrifice in the feast of expiation, Lev. xvi.

The order of these sacrifices is expressed by (προλεπον,) *first*, and (επειτα) *then*; "First for his own sins, and then for those of the people." Either the whole discharge of the office of the high priest may be intended in this order, or that which was peculiar to the feast of expiation. For he was in general to take care in the first place about offering for his own sins according to the law, Lev. iv; for if that were not done in due order, if their own legal guilt were not expiated in its proper season according to the law, they were no way meet to offer for the sins of the congregation; yea, they exposed themselves to the penalty of excision. (Τετα των ιδιων αμαρτιων) *for his own sins*; and this upon a double account. First, because he was *really a sinner*, as the rest of the people were: "If he do sin according to the sin of the people," Lev. iv, 3. Secondly, that upon the expiation of his own sins in the first place, he might be the more meet to represent him who *had no sin*. And therefore he was not to offer for himself in the offering that he made for the people, but stood therein as a *sinless person*, as our high priest was really to be;—"for the sins of the people," (των τε λαου) that is, for the *whole congregation* of Israel, Lev. xvi, 21; this was the duty; and all that could be learned from it was, that some more excellent priest and sacrifice was to be introduced.

§3. Our high priest had no need to offer sacrifice in this way; *daily, many* sacrifices, or any for *himself*.

"For this he did once when he offered himself." (Τετο γαρ εποιησεν) *this he did*; (τετο) *this*, refers only to one of the antecedents, namely, "offering for the sins of the people." *This* he did *once*, when he offered himself; for himself he did not offer. Contrary, there-

fore, to the sense of the whole church of God, contrary to the analogy of faith, and with no small danger in the expression, Socinus first affirmed, that the Lord Christ offered also *for himself*, or his own infirmities and sufferings, as he and his followers explain themselves. But nothing can be more abhorrent from truth and piety than this assertion: for,

1. If Christ offered *for himself*, then the apostle expressly, in terms, affirms, that Christ offered for *his own sins*, and that distinctly from the sins of the people. And from this blasphemy we are left to relieve ourselves by an interpretation that the scripture nowhere countenances; viz. that by *sins*, "infirmities or miseries" are intended.

2. The sole reason pretended in favor of this absurd assertion is, that the article (*τοῦτο*) *this*, must answer to the whole preceding proposition as its antecedent. But to answer the *whole* antecedent in both its parts, it is indispensably necessary that he must, as they did, offer *two distinct offerings*, the first for himself, and the other for the people. But this is expressly contradictory to what is here affirmed, that he offered himself *once only*; and if but once, he could not offer for *himself* AND for the *people*, which none could do.

3. This insinuation not only enervates, but is contradictory to the principal design of the apostle in the verse foregoing and that which follows. For ver. 26, he, on purpose, describes our high priest by such properties and qualifications as might evidence him to have *no need* to offer for his own sins, as those priests had. For from this consideration that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," the apostle makes this inference—that he needed not to offer for himself as those high priests did. But, according to this interpretation, no such thing follows; but, notwith-

standing all qualifications, he had *need to offer* for his "own sins." Wherefore the whole design of the apostle in these verses is by such interpretation utterly perverted and overthrown.

4. Again; when those priests offered for their "own sins," their sins were of the *same nature* with those of the people, Lev. iv, 3. If therefore this be repeated *anew*, "This he did when he offered," &c. sins being expressed only in the first place, and *understood* in the latter; sins *properly so called* must be intended; which is the height of blasphemy.

5. If Christ offered for his own infirmities, then those infirmities were *hindrances* to his offering for others. For that is the only reason why he should offer for their removal. But this is so far otherwise that indeed what infirmity he had was even *necessary* for a meet high priest and sacrifice; for so was every thing that is inseparable from human nature; which consideration is utterly destructive of this figment.

6. Besides; this imagination will admit of no *tolerable sense* in its exposition or application. For how can we conceive that Christ offered for his own infirmities, that is, his sorrows, sufferings, and obnoxiousness to death? It must be by his sufferings and death; for by them he offered himself to God. But this is absurd and foolish; *by his sufferings* he offered *for his sufferings!* What he offered for, he took away, as he did "the sins of the people;" but his own sorrows he took not away, but underwent them all.

7. It is contradictory to the principal maxim of the *Socinians* themselves, with respect to the priesthood of Christ; for they maintain, that this one perfect offering or expiatory sacrifice was in *heaven only*, and not on earth. But he could not at his appearance in the holy

place offer for his own infirmities and miseries, for they were all passed and finished, himself being exalted in immortality and glory. Christ offered himself (*εφάπαξ*) *once*, saith the apostle; *at one time*. This I suppose is agreed. Then he “offered for himself, and his own sins,” or not at all, for he offered but once, and at one time; where then did he thus offer himself, and when? In *heaven* upon his ascension, say the *Socinians* with one accord. Where then and when did he offer *for himself*? “On the *earth*.” Then he offered *himself twice*. No, by no means, he *offered not* himself on the earth; how then did he *offer for himself on the earth*? He did not indeed *offer himself* on the earth, but he *prepared himself* for his offering on the earth, and therein he *offered for* himself; that is, he did, and he did not offer himself upon the earth!

§4. The way and manner of Christ’s offering is directly opposed to the frequency of the legal sacrifices repeated daily as there was occasion. Those high priests offered (*καθ’ ἡμέραν*) *daily*, on all occasions; he (*εφάπαξ*) *once* only. And cannot but observe, by the way, that this assertion is no less absolutely exclusive of the *missatical* sacrifices of the Roman priests, than it is of the *Levitical* sacrifices of the high priest of the Jewish church. In their mass itself they expressly “offer it to God a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead;” and this they do a thousand times more frequently, than the expiatory sacrifices were among the Jews. Whatever ends they therefore fancy to themselves, by pretending to offer the *same* sacrifice that Christ did, they contradict the words of the apostle, and wholly evert the force of his argument. For if the *same* sacrifice which Christ offered be *often offered*, and had need so to be, the whole argument to prove the excellence of his priesthood, in that he offer-

ed himself *but once*, above them who often offered the same sacrifice, falls to the ground. And hence also, that Christ offered himself at the supper the night before he was betrayed, as the *Trent* council affirms, Sess. xx, cap. 1; is to give the apostle the lie.

What he offered is expressed in the last place, and therein the reason is contained why he offered but once, and needed not to do so daily, as those priests did. And this gives the highest preference of the priesthood of Christ above that of Levi. For these priests had nothing of their *own* to offer, but Christ had that which was originally and absolutely *his own*, HIMSELF, a sacrifice able to atone for all the sins of mankind.

§5. (II.) Hence we may observe,

1. God requireth our faith and obedience in nothing but what is at once absolutely needful for us, and highly reasonable to every enlightened mind. Such was this priesthood of Christ, now proposed to the faith of the church, in comparison of what was before enjoyed.

2. That no sinful man was meet to offer the great expiatory sacrifice for the church; much less is any sinful man fit to offer *Christ himself*. As the first part of this assertion declares the insufficiency of the Jewish priests, so doth the latter the vain pretence of the priests of Rome. The former the apostle proves and confirms expressly; and the latter is, on many accounts, a vile presumptuous imagination. For a poor sinful worm of the earth to interpose himself between God and Christ and offer the one in sacrifice to the other, what an issue is it of pride and folly!

3. The excellency of Christ's person and priesthood freed him in his offering from many things that the Levitical priesthood was obliged to. No purifications, repetitions, succession, &c. belong to him,

4. No sacrifice could bring us to God, and save the church to the utmost, but that wherein the Son of God himself was both priest and offering. Such an High Priest *became* us who offered himself once for all. How precious is a view of the glory of this mystery; how satisfactory to the souls of believers! What could not this priest prevail for in his interposition on our behalf? Must he not needs be absolutely prevalent in all he aims at? Were our cause entrusted in any other hand, what security could we have that it should not miscarry? And what could not this offering make atonement for? What sin, or whose, could it not expiate? "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!"

VERSE 22.

For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

§1. The subject stated. §2. (I.) The different means of constituting the different priests. §3. (II.) The different times. §4. (III.) The difference of the persons. §5. (IV.) The difference in their state and condition. §6. Observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle in this verse summeth up the whole of his preceding discourse, so as to evidence the true and proper foundation, which all along he hath built and proceeded on, with wonderful brevity in an elegant antithesis; wherein he considers,

1. The different *means* of the constitution of these different priests: on the one hand, the law; and on the other, the word of the oath.

2. The different *times* of their constitution; the one in the giving of the law; the other after the law.

3. The difference of their *persons*; those of the first sort were men, and no more; the other was the Son.

4. The difference in their *state and condition*; the former had infirmities, the latter is consecrated for ever.

§2. (I.) (Ο νομος) *the law*, that is, the ceremonial law, as we call it; the law given in Horeb, concerning religious rites, the way and manner of the solemn worship of God in the tabernacle. And what doth the law do? (Καθίστησι) *it appointeth*. He speaks in the *present* time. So long as the law continueth in force and efficacy it *appointeth* such priests. Hereunto is opposed (λογος της ορκωμοσίας) *the word of the oath*, as the constituting cause of this new priest. It was the "*word*," the promise of God declared by his oath. And herein hath it many advantages above the law; for it implies particularly both an high *federal solemnity*, and the *immutability* of that counsel whence the matter sworn to proceeds.

§3. (II.) The difference of the *time* wherein these priesthoods were ordained, is included, on the one hand, and expressed on the other. For the former, it was when the law was given, whereby they were made priests; the latter was (μετα του νομου) *after the law*, or the giving of it.

1. The priesthood confirmed by an oath, and introduced *after* the law, was utterly inconsistent with the law and priesthood thereof. Wherefore, of necessity, either the law and the priesthood of it must be *disannulled*, or the *oath of God* must be of none effect; for what he had sworn to was inconsistent with the continuance of what was before appointed for a time.

2. This *new priesthood* could no way be made *subordinate* or *subservient* to the other, so as to leave it a place in the church. But as it was eminently above

it in dignity and benefit, so the use of the other was only to be an introduction to it, and therefore must cease thereon.

3. This *new priesthood* had its reasons, grounds, and representations long before the giving of the law; for besides a virtual constitution in the first *promise*, two thousand years before the giving of the law, it had also a typical representation in the priesthood of *Melchisedec*; and it received only a *declaration* and confirmation in the account given of the *oath of God* after the law.

§4. (III.) The third difference is, that the law made (*ανδρωτους*) *men*, to be high priests; that is, those who were *mere men*, and no more. In opposition hereunto, the word of the oath makes (*υιον*) “the *Son*,” an High Priest; that Son who is Lord over the whole house, and whose the house is. Many ways there were, whereby he was *manifested* to be so; especially by his miraculous conception and nativity, and by his resurrection from the dead. Hence with respect to *them* he is sometimes called “the Son of God;” not that he *became* so thereby, but was only *declared* to be such. Into this therefore the apostle resolves the force of his argument—the dignity of the person of our High Priest, *the Son of God*; for hereon the whole excellency and efficacy of his priesthood depends.

§5. (IV.) It is added in the last place, that the law made men priests, (*εχοντας ασθενειαν*) *that had infirmity*; subject to infirmities; and those were of two sorts, *moral* and *natural*; neither could they be freed from either of them during the whole time of their priesthood. Hence they were obliged continually, to the last day of their lives, to offer sacrifices for their *own sins*; and the issue of their *natural* weakness was death itself; this seized every one of them, so as to put an

everlasting end to their sacerdotal administrations. But wherefore did the law make such priests, *mén*, mere men, that had infirmity, subject to sin and death, so as to put an end to their office? The reason is plain, because it could not find any better. The law must be content with such as were to be had, and in itself it had no power to make them better. In opposition hereunto it is said, "the word of the oath made the Son (*τέλειωμενον εις τον αιωνα*) *consecrated for ever.*" What the apostle intends here, in a special manner, is his absolute freedom from the sinful infirmities of other priests; and for which primarily sacrifice was to be offered. And the apostle here opposing the *consecration* of Christ to their *having infirmities*, sheweth sufficiently he intended not to insinuate that he offered for any infirmities of his *own*. If he had any, why *opposed* to them who had? And if he had offered for his own infirmities, the apostle could not have charged the *law* with weakness, that it made priests which *had infirmity*; for, on that supposition, "the word of the oath" should have done so also. But whereas his exaltation into heaven for the discharge of the remaining duties of his priesthood, in his intercession for the church, belonged to the perfection of his consecration, he was therein also freed from all those *natural* infirmities which were necessary to him as a sacrifice.

§6. The ensuing observations offer themselves;

1. There never was, nor can be any more than two sorts of priests in the church, the one made by the law, the other by the oath of God. Wherefore,

2. As the bringing in of the priesthood of Christ after the law, and the priesthood constituted thereby, did abrogate and disannul it; so the bringing in of another priesthood after his, will abrogate and disannul that also. And therefore,

3. Plurality of priests under the gospel overthrows the whole argument of the apostle in this place, and if we have yet priests that have infirmities, they are made by the law and not by the gospel.

4. The sum of the difference between the law and the gospel, terminates in the difference between the priests of the one and the other state.

5. The great foundation of our faith, and the hinge whereon all our consolation depends, is this, that our high priest is the Son of God.

6. The everlasting continuance of the Lord Christ in his office is secured by the oath of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 1.

Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

§1. The general contents of this chapter. §2. The exposition of these words. §3. Continued. §4. Observation. The principal glory of the priestly office of Christ depends on the glorious exaltation of his person.

§1. **T**HERE are two general parts of this chapter:

First, A farther *explication* of the excellency of the priesthood of Christ, or of Christ himself as vested with that office.

Secondly, A farther *confirmation* thereof; wherein is introduced the consideration of two covenants—the Old and the New. For to the *former* was the administration of the Levitical priests confined; of the *latter* Christ as our priest, is the mediator and surety. And therefore the apostle fully proves the excellency of this

new covenant above the old, which redounds to the glory of its mediator.

§2. "Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum," (κεφαλαιον, *capitulum*, *caput*) properly the *head* of any living creature. But the most frequent use of it is in a metaphorical sense, as here. The following words (ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις) "of the things which we have spoken," are capable of a double interpretation. The preposition may be put for (ἐν) *in* or *among*; or it may be in a manner *redundant*, and no more then is intended but (τῶν λεγομένων) *of the things spoken*. Both these senses are consistent; for the apostle in this and the ensuing verses both briefly recapitulates what he had evinced by his preceding arguments, and also declares what is the principal thing he had contended for. I incline to the latter signification, which is respected in our translation; yet so as that the former also is true, and safely applicable to the text.

"We have such an high priest." (ἔχομεν) *We have*. Whatever you think of us, whatever you boast of yourselves, *we have* an exalted high priest in the *Christian church*.

He would moreover teach us, by this word, that whatever is the glory and dignity of our high priest, all will not suffice without an interest in him, and an especial relation to him. And we may know whether "we have" an high priest or no, really and substantially, by the use we make of him, as such, in all our approaches unto God. (Τοιούτου) *such*; he doth not now say, merely, that we have an *high priest*, nor *another* high priest, but moreover "*such*" an one as hath that *dignity*, and those *excellencies*, which he ascribes to

him. The salvation of the church doth not depend merely on its having an high priest, which yet is in itself absolutely necessary, but on his dignity and excellency, his exaltation and glory. And *this* it is the apostle's design to prove, as we before observed; and not the *reality* of his priesthood, nor yet absolutely the *qualifications* of his person. He is incomparably exalted above the legal high priest; for what did he do, after he had offered the anniversary sacrifice of expiation to God? He entered, indeed, into the holy place with the blood of the sacrifice; and presented it there before the august pledges of the presence of God. But all the while he was there he *stood* before the typical throne with holy awe and reverence. And immediately on the discharge of his duty he was to *withdraw*, and go out of the holy place. But what was this to the glory of *our* high priest? After he had offered his great sacrifice to God, he entered—not into the holy place made with hands, but—into *heaven itself*? not to *stand* with humble reverence before the *throne*, but to *sit on the throne* of God, at his *right hand*, and that for evermore.

§3. (Εκαθισεν) *He sat down.* Of this there was nothing typical in the legal high priest, who never sat down in the holy place. But as he was in *many* things typified by the Levitical priests, so in what they *could not* reach he was represented in Melchisedec, who was both *king and priest*. And hence he is prophesied of as a “priest upon his throne;” Zech. vi, 12: and the immutable stability of his state and condition is also intended.

The *dignity* itself consists in the place of his residence, (εν δεξιᾷ) *at the right hand*. See the exposition of chap. i, 3.

This "right hand" is said to be (τε θρουε της μεγαλωσυνης) "of the throne of the Majesty." There is frequent mention in scripture of the *throne* of God. A "throne" is (*insigne regium*) an "ensign of royal power." That intended by it is, the manifestation of the glory and power of God in his authority and sovereign rule over all. "Majesty" denotes the glorious greatness and power of God himself: for his essential glory and power is intended. The right hand of the "throne of Majesty" is the same with the right hand of God. Only God is represented in *all his glory*, as on his throne. Higher expression there cannot be used to lead us into an holy adoration of the tremendous invisible glory, which is intended. And this is the eternal stable condition of the Lord Christ our high priest, (εν απανσις) *in the heavens*; wherein is the special manifestation of the glorious presence of God. Hence our Savior hath taught us to call on God, as "our Father who is in heaven."

§4. From the words we may observe,

The principal glory of the priestly office of Christ depends on the glorious exaltation of his person. To this end it is here pleaded by the apostle, and thereby he evinceth his glorious excellency above all the other high priests. The divine nature of Christ is capable of no real exaltation by an *addition* of glory, but only by *manifestation*. In his incarnation, and his whole converse on the earth, he cast a veil over his eternal glory, so that it appeared not in its own native lustre. Those indeed who believed on him, saw his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John i, 14; but they saw it darkly, as in a glass. The person of Christ as to his divine nature, was *always* on the throne; he came down from

heaven, and descended into the lower parts of the earth; was obedient to death, and redeemed his church with his own blood, by means of the human nature he assumed. His divine person can no more really leave the throne of Majesty, that cease to be. He was still in heaven; "the son of man who is in heaven;" even on the throne of Majesty; this being an inseparable property of divine authority.

It is, then, Christ in the human nature that is capable of this exaltation, by a real addition of glory. Not the *manifestation* of his glory with respect to his human nature, but the real *collation* of glory upon him after his ascension, is intended. And though this glory be not absolutely infinite, and essentially divine, (which indeed cannot be communicated,) yet is it not absolutely above, but also of *another kind* than the utmost of any other created being either hath or is capable of. This *exaltation* of Christ gives glory to his office; it is also a manifest pledge, and a demonstrative evidence, of the absolute perfection of his *oblation*; and that by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified. By his glorious power he makes all things subservient to the end of his mediation. For he is given to be "head over all things to the church." And he is able to render the persons and duties of believers *accepted* in the sight of God. To present them to God is the great remaining duty of his office; and that they be so, is their only real concern in this world; and what greater security can they have of acceptance, than the interest and glory which their priest hath in heaven? 1 John ii, 1, 2.

VERSE 2.

A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle; which the Lord pitched, and not man.

§1. The general scope of the text, and the subject stated. §2. (I.) What is affirmed of our high priest. A minister of the sanctuary. §3. And of the true tabernacle. §4. (II.) An amplification of what is affirmed. §5. (III.) Observations.

§1. **T**HIS verse contains the second pre-eminence of Christ as our high priest, which the apostle calls over in this summary of this discourse. The words consist of two parts:

1. What is affirmed of our high priest; that he was "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle."

2. An amplification of what is so affirmed; "which the Lord fixed, and not man."

§2. (I.) "Minister of the sanctuary." It is affirmed that he is (λεϊτουργος) *a minister*; having declared the glory and dignity which he is exalted to, as sitting down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven; what can be farther expected from him? There he lives, eternally happy in the enjoyment of his own blessedness and glory. Is it not reasonable it should be so, after all the hardships and miseries he underwent in this world? Who can expect that the Son of God should any longer condescend to office and duty? Neither generally have men any other thoughts concerning him. But where then should lie the *advantage* of the church in his exaltation, which the apostle designs, in an especial manner, to demonstrate? Wherefore to the mention of it he immediately subjoins the continuation of his office; he is still a

public minister for the church. For, be it observed, that it is a name of his *priestly office*, wherein he acts towards God, and before God on our behalf, according to the duty of a priest. And by virtue thereof, he also communicates all things from God to us; for the whole administration of things sacred between God and the church is committed to him. (Τὸν ἁγίον) *of the sanctuary*; the inmost part of the tabernacle, which our apostle calls (chap. ix, 3, ἁγία ἁγίων, i. e. קדש קדשים) “the holy of holies,” the most holy place; and absolutely he calls it (ἁγία) the *holies*, chap. ix, 8, 12, 24, 25; xiii, 11. And hence the word is rendered by most interpreters, “the *sanctuary*.” And this, in the present application of it, is nothing but *heaven itself*, as the place of God’s glorious presence; the temple of the living God, Psal. cii, 19, “He looked down from the height of his *sanctuary*, from the *heaven* did the Lord behold the earth.” And so the apostle himself, chap. ix, 24, “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself.” And this is called the *sanctuary* because there is *really* what was but *typically* represented in the sanctuary below. It was a joyful time with the church of old when the high priest entered into the holy place; for he carried with him the blood wherewith *atonement* was made for all their sins; yet he was again to leave that place and his ministrations. But *our* High Priest *abides* in the true sanctuary for ever, always representing the efficacy of that blood whereby atonement was made for all our sins. As no interposition between heaven and us should discourage us, while Christ is there on our behalf, so his being there will draw our hearts and minds thither continually, if so be we are really interested in his holy ministrations.

§3. (Και της σκηνης αληθινης) *and of that true tabernacle.* Expositors generally agree, that by "*true*," in this place is intended that which is *substantial* and abiding, as opposed to that which is umbratile and transitory. The old tabernacle was figurative and typical, denoting somewhat that was to be the "*true*" and substantial tabernacle of God. So is the expression interpreted, John vi, 32, "Moses gave you not the true bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the *true* bread from heaven," that is, spiritually *substantial* and abiding, nourishing the soul to eternal life. Most expositors take the tabernacle, as they do the sanctuary, for heaven itself; but by this "*true tabernacle*," the human nature of Christ himself is intended. For,

1. Of this the old tabernacle was a type. Thence is the expression taken, and to that is the opposition made in the epithet "*true*." This therefore is our best direction and rule in the interpretation of this expression. Now that tabernacle was not erected to be a type of heaven, nor is any such thing intimated in the scripture: a token, pledge, and means it was of God's presence with his people here on earth, whence also he is said to dwell among them. But this he doth not really and substantially only through Christ: he therefore alone is this true tabernacle. For,

2. In answer to this, when he came into the world, it is said that (εσκήνωσε) "*he fixed his tabernacle among us*," John i, 14; because the tabernacle of old was the way and means of God's *dwelling* among the people, in the pledges of his gracious presence.

3. He himself calleth his *own body* his *temple*, with respect to the temple at Jerusalem, which was of the same nature and use with the tabernacle, John ii, 19—

22; because his body was that true and substantial temple and tabernacle whereof he was the minister. -

4. That is the "true tabernacle" which God *truly and really* inhabiteth, and on account whereof he is our God. This was the nature, use, and end of the tabernacle of old. God dwelt therein in the signs and pledges of his presence, and was on account thereof the God of the people, according to the terms of the covenant between them, Exod. xxv, 3; Rev. xxi, 3. That, therefore, wherein God dwells really and substantially, and on the account whereof he is our God in the covenant of grace; that, and no more, is the "*true tabernacle*." But this is in Christ alone; for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily," Col. ii, 9; thus the human nature of Christ is that true substantial tabernacle, wherein God dwelleth personally.

5. He is the only way and means of our approach to God in holy worship, as the tabernacle was of old. He was in his own person, and what he did therein, to answer all those types of priest, sacrifice, altar, tabernacle, and what belonged thereto. He was the body and substance of them all, Col. ii, 17.

§4. (II.) "Which the Lord pitched, and not man," (*ἣν ἐπέξευεν ὁ Κύριος*) the article (*ἣν*) *which*, confines the reference to the *tabernacle*, and proves that it extends not to the sanctuary mentioned before. Of the true *tabernacle which* "the Lord *pitched*," or *fixed*. It is a word peculiarly proper to express the erection and fixing of a tabernacle. The preparation of the body of Christ is that which is intended. "A body hast thou prepared me:" chap. x, 5. And this body was to be taken down and folded up for a season, and afterwards to be erected again, without breaking or losing any part of it. This property, of all buildings, was *pe-*

culiar to a tabernacle, and so was it with the body of Christ in his death and resurrection.

The author of this work was (*ο Κυριος*) *the Lord*. This is the word whereby the writers of the New Testament express the name *Jehovah*. And whereas, in the revelation of that name, God declared that self-subsisting firmitude and unchangeableness of his nature, whereby he would infallibly give subsistence to his word, and accomplishment to his promises, the apostle hath respect to it in this great work wherein all the promises of God became yea and amen. "*And not man.*" Some suppose that this expression is *redundant*; for it may seem that to say it was pitched by the Lord sufficiently includes it was not done by man. But rather the expression is *emphatical*, and the apostle hath an especial respect to the *incarnation* of Christ, without the concurrence of man in natural generation; in answer to that inquiry of the blessed virgin, "how shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Luke i, 34, 35. This was the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and whereof Christ is the minister.

§5. (III.) Hence we may observe the following things:

1. The Lord Christ in the height of his glory, condescends to discharge the office of a public minister in behalf of the church. As all the shame, reproach, misery, and death that he was to undergo on earth deterred him not from undertaking this work; so all the glory which he is environed with in heaven, diverts him not from continuing the discharge of it.

2. All spiritually sacred and holy things are laid up in Christ. All the utensils of holy worship of old, all means of sacred light and purification were laid up in the tabernacle.

3. He hath the ministration of all these holy things committed to him. He is the minister both of the sanctuary and tabernacle and of all things contained in them. Herein he stands in no need of assistance, nor can any take his work off his hands.

4. The human nature of Christ is the only true tabernacle wherein God would dwell personally and substantially. The dwelling of God with men was ever looked upon as an infinite condescension. So Solomon, at the dedication of the temple; "but will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," 1 Kings viii, 27. But his dwelling in the human nature of Christ is quite of another nature, and his loving condescension inconceivably more conspicuous. Hence is that expression of our apostle, "in him dwelt the fulness of the godhead bodily," Col. ii, 9. It is not any sign or token, it is not any effect of the divine power, goodness and grace, that dwells in him, but the *fulness of the godhead*, that is, the divine nature itself. And this dwelleth in him *bodily*; that is, by the assumption of the body, or the human nature into personal subsistence with the Son of God. How glorious should this be in our eyes! How did they of old admire the condescension of God, in his dwelling in the tabernacle and temple by the glorious signs of his presence! And yet was it all but a dark representation, a shadow of this love and grace, whereby he dwells in our nature in Christ!

5. The church hath lost nothing by the removal of the old tabernacle and temple, all being supplied by this sanctuary, true tabernacle, and minister thereof. It is almost incredible how the vain mind of man is addicted to an outward beauty and splendor in religious worship. Take it away, and with the most

you destroy all religion itself; as if there were no beauty but in painting, no evidence of health, or vigor of body, but in warts and wens! An hard thing it is to raise the minds of men to a satisfaction in things merely spiritual and heavenly. Hence is there at this day so great a contest in the world, about tabernacles and temples, modes of worship and ceremonies which men have found out in the room of those very things which they cannot deny but God would have removed. But to them that believe Christ is precious, and this true tabernacle, with his ministration, is more to them than all the old pompous ceremonies and services of divine institution, much more the superstitious observances of human invention.

6. We are to look for the gracious presence of God only in *Christ*. As of old, all the symbols of God's presence were confined to the *tabernacle*; so neither the love, nor grace, nor goodness, nor mercy of God are elsewhere to be found but in Christ, nor can we by any other means be made partakers of them.

7. It is by Christ alone that we can make our approach to God in his worship. All sacrifices of old were to be brought to the door of the tabernacle; what was offered elsewhere was an abomination to the Lord. With the instruments, with the fire, with incense that belonged to the tabernacle, were they to be offered, and no otherwise. "And it is now by Christ alone that we have access by one spirit unto the Father," Ephes. ii, 18. He is the only way of going to him, John xiv, 6; and by his blood is consecrated a new and living way to the holy place, chap. x, 19, 20.

8. It was an institution of God, that the people in all their distresses should make their supplications towards the tabernacle or holy temple. 1 Kings viii,

29, 30. And it is to the Lord Christ alone, who is both the true tabernacle and the minister thereof, that we care to look in all our spiritual distresses.

VERSE 3.

For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

§1. The subject stated. §2 (I.) A general assertion concerning every high priest. §3. (II.) A particular inference of what necessarily belongs to Christ. The offering of himself. §4. (III.) Observations.

§1. **T**HE summary *description* of our High Priest is carried on in this verse. And the apostle manifests, that as he wanted nothing which any other high priest had, that was necessary to the discharge of his office, so he had it all in a more *eminent manner* than any other. There are two things in the words:

I. A *general assertion* of the nature, duty, and office of every high priest.

II. A *particular inference* from them, of what necessarily belonged to the Lord Christ in the susception and discharge of his office.

§2. (I.) "Every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices." The universality of the expression is to be observed; (*πας αρχιερεως*) *every high priest*. The apostle thus expresseth it, because there lay no exception against his argument, seeing that in the whole multitude of high priests, in their succession from first to last, there was no one but was appointed to this end, and had this duty incumbent upon him, yet it is not one special duty of their office that he insisteth on, but the *general end* for which they were appointed. (*Καθιστάται*) *is ordained*, appointed of God by the law, see chap. v, 12. "To offer gifts and sacrifices." This

appears in their original institution, Exod. xxviii, 29; and none but they might approach to God, to offer any thing sacredly unto him. The people might *bring* their offerings to God, but they could not *offer* them upon the altar. And God hereby taught the people that nothing should ever be accepted from them, but by the hand of the High Priest who was to come. And whoever he be, if as great and prosperous as King Uzziah, who shall think to approach to God immediately without the interposition of this High Priest, he is smitten with the plague of *spiritual leprosy*. "*Gifts and sacrifices*;" (δωρα, *munera*, *donaria*, *dona*.) Sometimes all (קרבנים) *the corbans* in general are intended by this word; for all sacred *offerings*, of what sort soever, were called *corbans*, (Θυσιαί) *bloody sacrifices*; sacrifices by immolation, or *killing*, of whatever sort the matter of it was, or to whatever special end it was designed. And the *Mincoth* were offerings of *dead things*, as of corn, oil, meats and drinks. To offer all these was the office of the priesthood ordained; and we are taught thereby, that there is no approach to God without continual respect to sacrifice and *atonement* for sin; and so necessary was this to be done, that the very office of the priesthood was appointed for it. Men do but dream of the pardon of sin, and acceptance with God, without atonement. This the apostle layeth down as that which was necessary for *every high priest* by God's institution. There never was any high priest, but his very office and essential duty was to *offer gifts and sacrifices*, for to that end was he ordained of God.

§3. (II.) Hence he infers, that it was necessary "this man should have somewhat to offer." For being a minister of the heavenly sanctuary, and the true tabernacle, he was an high priest; yet this he could not

be, unless he had "*somewhat to offer*" to God. An high priest that had nothing to offer, and who was not ordained to that very end, is indeed no priest at all—(Οθεν) "*wherefore*" the whole force of this inference depends on this supposition,—that all the old typical institutions did represent what was really to be accomplished in Christ; whence it was *necessary* that he should be what they signified and represented. (Τσιν) "*This man.*" He of whom we speak, this high priest of the New Testament, before specified by his name *Jesus*, and by his dignity, *the Son of God*. This priest must have somewhat to offer, (αναγκαστον) *of necessity*; for whatever otherwise this glorious person might be, yet an high priest he could not be, unless he had somewhat to offer, (Εχειν) "*that he should have.*" It is not *possession* only that is intended; but *possession* with respect to *use*. He was so to have somewhat to offer, as to offer it accordingly; for it would not avail the church to have an High Priest that should have somewhat to offer, if it were not *actually offered*. (Τι δ προσεveyκη) *somewhat to offer*; that is, in sacrifice to God. The apostle expresseth it indefinitely, (τι δ) *somewhat*, but he elsewhere declares expressly that this was "*himself*," his whole human nature, soul and body. For it is impossible, as he declares, that the blood of bulls or goats should ever take away sin, or purge the conscience of the sinner; chap. x, 1—8, &c. wherefore, as it was necessary that he should *have somewhat* to offer, so it was necessary that this somewhat should be *himself*, and nothing else.

§4. (III.) And from these words we may observe,

1. That there was no salvation to be had for us, not by Jesus Christ himself, without his sacrifice and oblation. It was of *necessity* that he should have somewhat to offer, as well as the legal priests. Some would

have it that Christ is our Saviour, only because he declared to us the way of salvation, and gave us an example of the way whereby we may attain it, in his own personal obedience. But whence then was it of necessity that he must have somewhat to offer to God as our priest, that is for us? For this belongeth not to his doctrine nor example. Wherefore there was no other way for our salvation, but by a real propitiation or ATONEMENT made for our sins; and whosoever looketh for salvation from any other quarter, will be deceived.

2. As God designed for the Lord Jesus Christ his proper work, so he furnished him with whatever was necessary for him that he might accomplish the important purpose. Wherefore a *body* did God prepare for him, chap. x, 1—8, &c.

3. The Lord Christ being to save the church in the way of office, he was not to be spared in any thing necessary thereto. And, in conformity to him,

4. Whatever state or condition we are called to, what is necessary to that state is indispensably required of us. So, in general, holiness and obedience are required in a state of reconciliation and peace with God,

VERSE 4.

For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.

§1. Introduction, and scope of the words. §2. The necessity of Christ's exercising his priesthood in heaven. §3. The subject farther explained. §4. First, why might not Christ be a priest on earth. §5. Secondly, why did he not first abolish the Levitical priesthood to make way for his own. §6. The sense ascertained. §7, 8. (III.) Observations.

§1. IN the preceding discourses the apostle hath fully proved, that the introduction of this new priesthood

under the gospel had put an end to the old; he proceeds in this verse to shew how *necessary* it was that he should neither "offer the things appointed in the law," nor yet abide in the state and condition of a priest here on earth," as those other priests did. For whereas it might be objected, if Christ was an High Priest as he pleaded, why then did he not minister the holy things of the church according to the duty of a priest? To which he replies, that such a supposition was *inconsistent with his office*, and destructive both of the law and the gospel. For it would thereby overthrow the *law*, for one that was not of the line of Aaron to officiate in the holy place; the law provided others, so that there was no room for his ministry. And the *gospel* also would have been of no use thereby, seeing on that supposition the sacrifice it was built upon would have been of the *same nature* with those under the law.

§2. "For if he were on the earth, he should not be a priest." (Εἰ μὲν) "if *indeed* he were on earth." The emphasis of the particle is not to be omitted. If *really* it were so; or, therein is force granted to the concession, *truly it must be so*. "If he were on earth," (referring to his present state and condition,) if he were not exalted into *heaven* in the discharge of his office; if he were not at the right hand of God in the heavenly sanctuary, but could have discharged his whole office on earth,—“If he were on earth,” (referring to his sacrifice and tabernacle,) had a priesthood of the *same order* and constitution with that of the law; if he were to have offered sacrifices of the *same kind* with them, which were to be *perfected* on the earth; if he were not to have offered *himself*, wherein his sacrifice could not be absolutely consummate without the presentation of himself in the most holy place not made with

hands—on this supposition, the apostle grants that “he could not be a priest” at all in any sense. He offered his great *expiatory sacrifice* not *on the earth*, in the sense of the *law*. Although the sacrifice of himself was complete *on the earth*; yet the whole service belonging to it, to make it effectual in the behalf of them for whom it was offered, was not nor could be; because the church could then have enjoyed no benefit thereby.

“Seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.” (*Ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἱερεῖς*, *Sacerdotibus existentibus*; cum sint sacerdotes) *whereas there are priests*. The apostle doth not grant that at the time when he wrote this epistle, there were legal priests, *de jure*, offering sacrifices according to the law. Indeed, *de facto*, there were; wherefore, (*αὖτις*) *being*, or seeing there are, respects the legal institutions of the priests and their right to officiate when the Lord Christ offered his sacrifice. *Then* there were priests who had a right to officiate in their office, and to “offer gifts according to the law.”

§3. Two things are to be inquired into, to give us the sense of these words and the force of the reasons in them.

First, Why might not the Lord Christ be a priest, and offer his sacrifice, continuing on the earth, to consummate it, notwithstanding the continuance of these priests according to the law?

Secondly, Why did he not first abolish this order of priests, and so make way for the introduction of his own priesthood?

§4. I answer to the *first*, that if he had been a priest *on the earth*, to have discharged the whole work of his priesthood, then he must either have been of the same order with them, or of another; and have offered sac-

offices of the same kind as they did, or sacrifices of another kind. But neither of these could be. For he could not be of the same order with them, being of the tribe of Judah, which was excluded from the priesthood. And therefore he could not offer the *same sacrifices* with them, for none might do so by the law but themselves. And of another order *together with* them he could not be. For there is nothing foretold of priests of *several orders* in the church at the same time. Wherefore, whilst they continue priests according to the law, Christ could not be a priest among them, neither of their order nor of another; that is, if the whole administration of his office had been on the earth together with theirs, he could not be a priest among them.

§5. Unto the *second* inquiry, I say, the Lord Christ could not by any means take away that other priesthood, until he himself had accomplished all that was signified thereby, according to God's institution. The whole end and design of God in its institution had been frustrated, if the office had ceased, *de jure*, before the whole of what was prefigured was fulfilled. And therefore although there was an intercession of its *administrations* for seventy years during the Babylonish captivity, yet was the *office itself* continued in its right and dignity, because what it designed to prefigure was not yet attained. And this was not done until the Lord Redeemer ascended into the heavenly *sanctuary*, to administer in the presence of God for the church.

§6. This therefore is the sense of the apostle's reasoning in this place: the priests of the order of Aaron continued, *de jure*, their administrations of holy things, until all was accomplished that was signified thereby; which was not done until the ascension of Christ into heaven. For the first tabernacle was to stand until

the way was made open into the holiest of all; now the Lord Messiah was not a priest after their order; nor could he offer the sacrifices appointed by the law. Hence it is evident, that he *could not have been a priest*, had he been to continue and administer on earth, for so their priesthood, with which his was inconsistent, could never have had an end. For this could not be without his *entrance* as a priest into the heavenly sanctuary.

It appears therefore how vain is the pretence of the *Socinians* from this place, to prove that Christ did not offer his expiatory sacrifice on the earth. For the apostle speaks nothing of his *oblation*, (which he had before declared to have been once for all) before he entered into heaven to make intercession for us; but only of the *order* of his priesthood, and the state and condition wherein the present administration of it was to be continued.

§7. (III.) *Obs. 1.* God's institutions rightly stated do never interfere. So we see those of the ancient priesthood and that of Christ did not. They had both of them their proper bounds and seasons; nor could the latter completely take place, until the former had expired. The entrance of Christ into the holy places which stated him in that condition wherein he was to continue the exercise of his priesthood to the consummation of all things, put an absolute period to the former priesthood, by accomplishing all that was thereby signified.

§8. *Obs. 2.* The discharge of all the parts and duties of the priestly office of Christ in their *proper order* were needful to the salvation of the church. His oblation was to be on the earth, but the continued discharge of his office was to be in heaven. Without this the former would not profit us; if he had done

no more he could not have been a priest. Unless the foundation of a propitiation for our sins be first laid we can have no hopes of acceptance with God; but when this is done, unless we have a continual application of the efficacy of it to our souls, neither our peace with God nor our access to him can be maintained.

VERSE 5.

Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle; for see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

§1. The connexion of this passage with the preceding discourse. §2. (I.) Exposition of the words. §3. God's admonition to Moses. §4. Concerning the pattern shewn to Moses on the mount. Not an æthærial fabric; but §5. The incarnation and mediation of Christ. §6. Objection answered. §7. (II.) Observations.

§1. **T**HE connexion of these words with the preceding discourse, which gives us the general design of the apostle, is to be previously considered. He had before intimated—that the high priests according to the law did not minister the heavenly things—and that the Lord Christ alone did so: whence he concludes his dignity and pre-eminence above them. The argument in general whereby the apostle proves that they served to the “example and shadow of heavenly things,” and *no more*, is taken from the words of God to Moses. And the force of it is evident; for God in those words declares that there was something above and beyond that *material* tabernacle which was prescribed to him. For he shewed him an *original* or an *exemplar*, when on the top of the mount, which the tabernacle below did but represent; and therefore they who ministered in it could serve only as “the *example* and shadow of heavenly things.” This therefore is the apostle's argument from this testimony; “If

God shewed to Moses on the top of the mount that which was heavenly, and he was to make an example or shadow of it, then they that ministered therein served only to the example and shadow of heavenly things.

§7. (I.) "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things." (*Οἱ δὲ*) *who*, refers to the *priests* mentioned ver. 4: "Seeing that they are priests," &c. particularly to the *high priests*. ver. 3; (*πας γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς*) "for every high priest;" *which* high priests (*λατρεῦσιν*) *do serve*; it is a sacred word, and signifies only to minister in holy worship and service; it respects therefore all that the high priests did, in the worship of God, in the tabernacle or temple. "Unto the example," (*υποδειγματι*) for a *specimen*; that whereby any thing is manifested by a part or *instance*; a *resemblance*, an obscure representation. Hence it is added, (*καὶ σκιά*) "and the *shadow*." Some suppose a shadow is here taken *artificially*, and opposed to an *express image* or complete delineation of any thing; as the first lines in comparison of any thing that is afterwards to be drawn to the life. Others take it *naturally*, as opposed to body or material substance. See Col. ii, 17. It is indifferent in whether sense we here take the word, for what is affirmed is true in both. If we take it in the first way, it intends that *obscure delineation* of heavenly mysteries, which was in the legal institutions. If it be used in the last way, then it declares that the *substance* of what God intended in all his worship was not contained in the services of those priests. There were some lines and shadows to represent the body, but the body itself was not there. "Of heavenly things." The things which God shewed to Moses on the mount.

§3. "As Moses (*κεχρηματισται*) *was admonished of God*. See Rom. xi, 4; Matt. ii, 22, &c. Moses had an immediate word, command, or *oracle from God* to the purpose; and was to use *great caution* about what was enjoined him, that there might be no mistake. The original denotes *admonition*: (Exod. xxv, 40, ודאָה ודאָה) "and look to it and do," take diligent care about it. The same is the sense of the Greek word (*ορα*) when thus used, *take heed, look well to it*. When John, upon surprisal, would have fallen down before the angel to worship him, he replieth; (*ορα μη*) "See thou do it not;" avoid it with care, Rev. xxii, 9, "*When he was about to make the tabernacle.*" The original word (*μελλων*) expresseth that which is *immediately future*. It was given him upon the *entrance* of his work, that it might make an effectual impression upon his mind. "To *make the tabernacle*;" (*επιτελεν, perficere*) to *accomplish*, to perfect, to finish; it includes here the beginning as well as the end of the work. The same with another Greek word (*ποιησαι*) in Acts vii, 44, where this whole passage is somewhat otherwise expressed, but to the same purpose.

§4. The warning and charge itself is, that he should "make all things according to the pattern shewed him in the mount." What this *pattern* was, how it was *shewed* to Moses, and how he was to make all things *according to it*, are not easy to be explained.

For the *pattern* itself, expositors generally agree, that on the top of the mount God caused to appear to Moses the form, fashion, dimensions, and utensils of that tabernacle which he was to erect. Whether this representation was made to Moses by way of internal vision, as the temple was represented to Ezekiel; or whether there was an ætherial fabric proposed to his bodily senses, is hard to determine. However, this

(תבנית) *exemplar*, or *pattern*, our apostle here calls "heavenly things."

I know not that there is any thing in this exposition contrary to the analogy of faith, or inconsistent with the design of the apostle. But withal I must acknowledge, that it is such as I know not how fully to embrace, for the reasons following:

1. If such a representation were made to Moses in the mount, and that be the *pattern* intended, then the tabernacle with all its ministry was a *shadow of that*. But this is contrary to our apostle in another place, who tells us that indeed all legal institutions were only a shadow, but withal that the *substance* or "body was of Christ," Col. ii, 17.

2. I do not see how the priests could minister in the *earthly tabernacle* as an "example and shadow" of such an *ætherial tabernacle*. For, if there were any such thing, it immediately vanished after its appearance; it ceased to be any thing, and therefore could not any longer be any heavenly thing; wherefore, with respect to that, they could not continue to serve to the example of heavenly things.

3. No tolerable account can be given of the *reason or use* of such a representation. For God doth not dwell in any such tabernacle in heaven, that it should be to represent his holy habitation. And as to that which was to be made on earth, he had given such punctual instructions to Moses, confirming the remembrance and knowledge of them in his mind by the Holy Spirit, by whom he was acted and guided, as that he needed no help from his imagination.

4. Whatever Moses did, it was for a testimony to the things which were to be spoken afterwards, chap. iii, 5. But these were the things of Christ and the

gospel, which therefore he was to have an immediate respect to.

§5. The sense of the words must be determined from the apostle himself. And it is evident,

1. That the *heavenly things*, to the resemblance of which the legal priests did minister, and the *pattern* shewed to Moses in the mount, were the *same*. Hereon depends the whole force of his proof from this testimony.

2. These heavenly things, he expressly tells us, were those which were *consecrated*, dedicated to God, and purified by the sacrifice of the blood of Christ, chap. ix, 23.

3. That Christ by his sacrifice did dedicate both himself, and the whole church and its worship to God. From these things it follows,

4. That God did spiritually and mystically represent to Moses, the *incarnation and mediation* of Christ, with the *church of the elect*, and its spiritual worship, which was to be gathered thereby; and how the tabernacle, with all that belonged to it, represented the same.

That the tabernacle which Moses made was a sign and figure of the body of Christ, we have before proved, ver. 2, and it is positively affirmed by the apostle, Col. ii, 17. And the tabernacle was but to represent "the real substantial inhabitation of the Godhead in the body, or human nature of Christ."

§6. It will be said, that what was shewed to Moses on the mount was only (חבנית) *τύπος*) a *likeness*, similitude, and *type* of other things. This therefore could not be Christ himself and his mediation, which are the substance of heavenly things, and not a resemblance of them. I answer,

1. All *representations* of Christ himself, antecedent to his actual exhibition in the flesh, (as his appearances in the human shape of old) were but resemblances and types of what should be afterwards.

2. His manifestation to Moses is so called not that it was a type of any other things above, but because it was the *prototype* of all that was to be done below. This was the foundation of the faith of the church of Israel in all generations. Their faith in God was not confined to the *outward things* they enjoyed, but on Christ represented by them. They believed that they were only resemblances of him and his mediation, and when they lost the faith of that, they lost all acceptance with God, in their worship. The relation of their ordinances to him, as their prototype and substance, was the line of life, wisdom, and beauty, that ran through them all. This being now taken away, they are all as a dead thing. When Christ was in them, they were the delight of God, and the joy of his saints. Now he hath unclothed himself of them, and left them to be rolled up as the garments he thought meet to wear in the *immature age* of the church, but which are now of no more use. Who now can see any beauty, any glory in the old temple administrations should they be revived? Where Christ is, there is glory, if we have the light of faith to discern it; and we may say of every thing where he is not, be it never so pompous to the eye of flesh, "*Ichabod*," where is the glory of it?

Jude tells us of a contest between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses, ver. 9. It is generally thought that the devil would have hindered the burial of it, that in process of time it might have been the

occasion of idolatry among the people. But, however that was, what was *signified* hereby, what was the contest he made to keep the body of Moses. the whole *system* of Mosaical worship and ceremonies, from being buried, when the life and soul of it was departed. And this hath proved the ruin of the Jews to this day.

§7. (II.) From the words and preceding exposition we may observe,

1. God alone limits the signification and use of all his own institutions. He hath instituted his holy *sacraments*, and hath put this virtue into them, that they should *exhibit* to the faith of believers the grace he designeth by them; but men have not been contented with this, and therefore they will put more into them than God hath furnished them with. They will have them to contain the *grace* which they exhibit, and to *communicate* it to all who are partakers of them. Thus some would have *baptism* to be *regeneration* itself, and that there is no other evangelical regeneration; nothing can be invented more pernicious to the souls of men. On the other hand, some suppose it to be such a distinguishing or rather *separating ordinance* that the administration of it in such a *way*, or such a *season*, is the fundamental rule of all church fellowship and communion; whereas God never designed it to any such end.

In the *supper of the Lord*, the church of Rome, in particular, is not contented that we have a representation and instituted *memorial* of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the signs of his body as broken, and his blood as shed for us, with an *exhibition of grace* in the word of promise, or the gospel; but they will have the natural body and blood of Christ, his flesh and his bones, to be contained therein, and to be eaten or devoured by all that partake of the outward

signs. This is to put that into an ordinance which God never put into it; to turn the wisdom of faith into carnal imagination. It requires the light of faith to apprehend the general exhibition of Christ to us in the sacraments.

2. It is an honor to be employed in any sacred service that belongs to the worship of God, though it be of an inferior nature. This was the greatest honor that any were made partakers of under the Old Testament, that they served only to the example and "shadow of heavenly things."

3. So great was the glory of heavenly ministration in the mediation of Jesus Christ, that God would not at once bring it forth in the church, until he had prepared the minds of men by types, shadows, examples, and representations of it. This was the end of all legal institutions of divine worship and service; and well is it for us, if we have a due apprehension of the glory of the heavenly ministration of Christ now it is introduced.

4. That our utmost care and diligence in the consideration of the mind of God, is required in all that we do about his worship.

The generality of men have been stupidly negligent herein, as if it were a matter wherein they were not at all concerned. When once men come to such an unconcernedness in the worship of God, as to engage in it they know not *why*, and to perform it they care not *how*, all manner of impiety will ensue in their lives, as is manifest from experience beyond the evidence of a thousand arguments.

It were no hard thing to demonstrate, that the principal way and means whereby God expects we should give glory to him in this world, is by a due observance of the divine worship he hath appointed. For herein

do we in an especial manner ascribe to him the glory of his sovereignty, of his wisdom, of his grace and holiness; when in his worship we bow down our souls under his authority alone. And when we see such an impress of divine wisdom on all his institutions, as to judge all other ways folly in comparison of them; when we have experienced of the grace represented and exhibited thereby, then do we glorify God aright.

VERSE 6.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant: which was established upon better promises.

§1. Connexion of the words, and the subject stated. §2. First, the comparative excellence of the ministry of Christ. §3. Secondly, the proof the assertion. §4. (I.) Christ is a Mediator. §5, 6. (II.) Of a better covenant. §7. (III.) Established on better promises. §8, 9. Whether the two covenants are really distinct, or only differ in administration. §10. To what end did the old covenant serve? §11. How it came to be a special covenant to Israel? §12. Wherein the two covenants differ? §13. The Socinian gloss refuted. §14—16. (IV.) Observations.

§1. **I**N this verse begins the second part of the chapter, concerning the difference between the two covenants, the Old and the New, with the pre-eminence of the latter above the former; and of the ministry of Christ above the High Priests upon that account. There are two parts of the words:

First, The excellency of the ministry of Christ asserted, by way of comparison; “He hath obtained a *more excellent* ministry: and the *degree* of that comparison; by how much also.”

Secondly, He annexeth the *proof* of this assertion; in that he is the “Mediator of a *better covenant*, established on better, or more excellent, promises.”

§2. *First*, The excellency of the ministry of Christ asserted by way of comparison. “But *now* hath he

obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much." As there is an *opposition* intended to the old covenant, and the Levitical priesthood; for the *season* is intended of the introduction of that covenant, and the better ministry wherewith it was accompanied.

That which is ascribed to the Lord Christ is (λεϊτουργία) a ministry. The priests of old had a *ministry*, "they ministered at the altar;" and Christ was (λεϊτουργος των αγιων, ver. 2.) "A *minister* of the holy things." Wherefore he had a *liturgy*, a ministry, a service committed to him. With respect to the church, his office is *supreme*, accompanied with sovereign authority; he is "Lord over his own house;" but he holds his office in *subordination* to God, being "faithful to him that appointed him."

The general way whereby our Lord Christ came to this ministry, was (τελευτησας) "he *obtained* it;" importing the *eternal purpose* and counsel of God, designing him thereunto; and the *actual call* of God, in which many things concurred, especially his unction with the Spirit above measure, for the holy discharge of his office.

The *quality* of this ministry is, that it is (διαφορωτερας) *more excellent*. The original word, in the *comparative* degree denotes a difference with a preference, or a comparative excellency. Our Lord's ministry so differed *from* the Levitical as to be *better* than it, or more excellent. There is also added the *degree* of this pre-eminence, so far as it is intended in the present argument, in the word (οσ ω.) *by how much*. The excellency of his ministry above that of the Levitical priests bears proportion with the excellency of the covenant whereof he was the mediator, above the old covenant wherein they administered. It is now he closeth his discourse, which he had so long engaged in, about

"the pre-eminence of Christ in his office above the high priests of old." And, indeed, this being the very hinge whereon his whole controversy with the Jews depended, he could not give it too much evidence, nor too full a confirmation.

§3. *Secondly*, The *proof* of this assertion follows; by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, established on better promises. The apostle intends to prove the *excellency of the covenant*, from the *excellency of the Mediator's ministry*. For on supposition of a *better covenant* to be introduced, it plainly follows, that *he* on whose ministry the dispensation of *that covenant* depended, must be *more excellent in that ministry* than they who appertained to the covenant now abolished. However, it may be granted that such as the priest is, such is the covenant; and such as the covenant is in dignity, such is the priest also. In the words there are three things observable;

I. What is in general ascribed to Christ, declaring the nature of his ministry; "He was a *Mediator*."

II. The determination of his mediatory office to the new covenant; "Of a *better covenant*."

III. The proof of the nature of this covenant as to its excellency; "It was established on better promises."

§4. (I.) (*Μεσίτης*) a *mediator*, is one who interposeth between God and man, for the doing of all those things whereby a covenant might be established between them, and made effectual, 1 Tim. ii, 5, 6. "There is one God and one *Mediator* between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." The principal part of his mediation consists in giving *himself a ransom*, or a price of redemption for the whole church.

The Lord Christ in his ministry is called (*μεσίτης*) the *Mediator* of the covenant, in the same sense as he is called (*εγγυς*) the *surety*, see chap. vii, 22.

1. To the office of a mediator it is required that there be *different persons* concerned. "A mediator is not of one, but, God is one," Gal. iii, 20; that is, if there were none but God concerned in this matter, as in an absolute promise, or sovereign precept, there would be no place for *such a mediator* as Christ is. It is further required,

2. That the *persons* entering into covenant be in such a *state and condition*, as that it is no way convenient, or even morally possible, that they should *treat immediately* with each other, otherwise a mediator to go between is altogether needless. It is moreover required,

3. That he who is this mediator, be *accepted, trusted, and rested* in, on both sides, so that the parties be everlastingly obliged in what he undertaketh on their behalf; and such as *admit not* of his terms, can have no benefit by the covenant. "Behold, saith God, my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth." (Εν ᾧ εὐδόκησα, Matt. iii, 17. "In whom I am well pleased.

4. A mediator must be a *middle person*, between both parties entering into covenant, and if they be of different natures, a perfect complete mediator ought to partake of each of their natures in the same person.

5. A mediator must be one who *voluntarily* undertaketh the work of mediation. This is required of every one who will effectually *mediate* between any persons at variance to bring them to an agreement on equal terms.

6. In this voluntary undertaking to be a *mediator*, two things were required:—that he should remove whatever kept the covenanters at a distance, or was a cause of enmity between them; for *such an enmity* is supposed, or there had been no need of a *mediator*;

that he should *procure*, in a way suited to the glory of God, the actual communication of all covenant blessings for them whose surety he was.

7. To all which we may add, that it is required of this mediator as such, that he gives assurance to the parties mutually concerned, of accomplishing the terms of the covenant, undertaking on each hand for them:—on the *part of God*, towards men, that they shall have peace and acceptance with him in the sure accomplishment of all the promises of the covenant:—on *our part* towards God, for our acceptance of the terms of the covenant, and our accomplishment of them, by his gracious aid.

§5. (II.) Two things are added in the description of this mediator:—That he was a Mediator of a *covenant*; and—that this covenant was *better* than another of which he was not the Mediator.

1. He was the “*Mediator of a covenant.*” And two things are therein supposed :

(1.) That there was *a covenant prepared* between God and man, that is, God had prepared the terms of it in a sovereign act of wisdom and grace.

(2.) That there was *need of a mediator*, that this covenant might be effectual to its proper ends—the glory of God, and the obedience of mankind with their reward. Rom. viii, 3, “For what the law *could not do* in that it was weak through the flesh,” &c. The persons with whom this covenant was to be made being *sinners*, apostatized from God, it became not his holiness or righteousness to treat immediately with them any more; nor would it have answered his holy ends; for if, when in a condition of *uprightness* and integrity, man kept not the terms of that covenant which was made without a mediator, although the terms were holy, just, good, and equal, how much less could any such thing

be expected from them in their *depraved* condition of apostacy from God, and enmity against him?

2. "He was the Mediator of a *better covenant*."

Wherefore it is supposed that there was *another* covenant, whereof the Lord Christ was not the Mediator; and in the following verses there are two covenants, a *first* and a *second*, an *old* and a *new*, compared together. Besides the original covenant with Adam, (which cannot be here intended) there were other *fœderal* transactions between God and the church, before the giving of the law on mount Sinai.

The first promise, given to our first parents after the fall, had in it the nature of a *covenant*, as being grounded on a promise of grace, and requiring obedience in all that received the promise. Again, the promise given and sworn to *Abraham*, is expressly called "the covenant of God," and it had the *whole nature* of a covenant, with a solemn outward seal appointed for its confirmation and establishment.

But neither of these, nor any transactions between God and man that may be reduced to them, as explanations, renovations, or confirmations of them, is the "first covenant" here intended. For they are not only *consistent* with the new covenant, so as that there was no necessity to remove them out of the way for its introduction, but indeed contained its essence and nature, and so were *confirmed* by it. Hence the Lord Christ himself is said to be a "minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the Fathers," Rom. xv, 8. As he was the Mediator of the new covenant, he was so far from abolishing those *promises*, that it belonged to his office to *confirm* them. Wherefore,

The *other covenant*, or testament, here supposed, is none other but that which God made with the people

of Israel on mount Sinai, ver. 9, "The covenant which I made with your fathers in the day I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt." This was the covenant which had all the institutions of worship annexed to it, chap. ix, 1—3.

§6. It remains that we inquire, *what was this covenant* whereof Christ was the Mediator, and what is here affirmed of it?

This can be no other, in general, but that which we call the *covenant of grace*. But the apostle doth not here consider the new covenant absolutely, and as it was *virtually* administered from the foundation of the world, in the way of promise; for, as such, it was consistent with that covenant made with the people at Sinai. And the apostle proves expressly, that the renovation of it made to Abraham, was no way *abrogated* by the giving of the law, Gal. iii, 17; nor was there any *interruption* of its administration made by the introduction of the law. But he treats of such an establishment of the new covenant, as wherewith the old covenant made at Sinai was *absolutely inconsistent*; and which was therefore to be removed out of the way. Wherefore he considers it here as it was *actually completed*, so as to bring along with it all the ordinances of worship which are proper to it, the dispensation of the spirit in them, and all the spiritual privileges wherewith they are accompanied. It is now so brought in as to become the entire rule of the church's faith, obedience, and worship.

This is the meaning of the Greek word, (*νενομωθενηται*) which we render *established*, "reduced into a fixed state of a law or ordinance." All the obedience required in it, all the worship appointed by it, all the privileges exhibited in it, and the grace administered with them, are given for a *statute*. That covenant which

had invisibly, by way of *promise*, put forth its efficacy under types and shadows, was now solemnly sealed, and confirmed in the death and resurrection of Christ. Hereon was the other covenant *disannulled* and removed; and not only the covenant itself, but all that *system* of sacred worship whereby it was administered. When the new covenant was given out only in the way of *promise*, it did not introduce a *worship and privileges* expressive of it. Wherefore it was *consistent* with a form of worship, rites and ceremonies composed into a yoke of bondage. And as these being added after it was given, did not overthrow its nature as a *promise*, so they were inconsistent with it, when it was completed as a *covenant*.

§7. (III.) In the last place the apostle tells us whereon this establishment was made, and that is (ἐπὶ κρείσσονι ἐπαγγελίᾳ) *on better promises*. Here we remark:

1. Every covenant between God and man, must be founded on and resolved into *promises*. Hence essentially a promise and a covenant are all one, and God calls an absolute *promise*, founded on an absolute decree, his *covenant*, Gen. ix, 11. The very being and essence of a divine covenant lies in the promise: hence are they called the “covenants of promise,” Ephes. ii, 12; such as are founded on and consist in promises. Upon supposition that God will condescend to enter into covenant with his creatures, it becometh his greatness and goodness to give them promises as the foundation of it; wherein he proposeth himself to them as the *eternal spring* of all power and goodness. Had he treated with us merely by a *law*, he had therein only revealed his sovereign *authority* and holiness; the one in the giving of the law, the other in the nature of it. But in *promises* he revealeth himself as the eternal spring of *goodness* and *power*. For the matter

of all promises is somewhat good ; and the communication of it depends on sovereign power. That God should so declare himself in his covenant, was absolutely necessary to direct and encourage the obedience of the covenanters : hereby he reserves the *glory of the whole* to himself. For the matter of those promises wherein the covenant is founded, is free, undeserved, and without respect to any thing in us, whereby it may in any sense be procured. And so in the first covenant which was given in the form of a law, attended with a *penal sanction*, the foundation of it was in a free and undeserved reward, even of the eternal enjoyment of God, which no goodness or obedience in the creature could possibly merit. It was also necessary on *our part*, that every divine covenant should be “founded on promises.” For there is no state wherein we may be taken into covenant with God, but it is supposed we are not arrived at that perfection and blessedness whereof our nature is capable, and which we cannot but desire. Wherefore, unless we are graciously prevented in the covenant with promises of deliverance from our present state, and the enjoyment of future blessedness, no covenant could be of use to us. Thus *every divine covenant* is “established upon promises.”

2. These promises are said to be, “*better promises*.” The other covenant was indeed *principally* represented under a *system of precepts*, and those almost innumerable. But it had its *promises* also; with respect therefore to them is the new covenant, wherefore the Lord Christ was the Mediator, said to be “established on better promises.” That it should be founded in promises, was necessary from its general nature as a covenant, and more necessary from the special nature of it as a covenant of grace. They are not only *better*, but they

are *positively good* in themselves, and absolutely the best that God ever gave, or will give to the church.

§8. This entrance which the apostle hath made in his discourse on the "two covenants," he continues to the end of the chapter. But, before we proceed, we must here take notice of a difference of no small importance, namely, whether these are indeed *two distinct* covenants as to the substance of them, or only a different administration of the *same* covenant. It is agreed,

1. That the way of reconciliation with God, of justification and salvation, was always one and the same; and that from the giving of the first promise none was ever saved but by the new covenant, and Jesus Christ the Mediator of it.

2. That the writings of the Old Testament, the law, psalms, and prophets, do contain and declare the doctrine of justification and salvation by Christ; this the church of old believed, and in the faith of it walked with God.

3. That by the covenant of Sinai, properly so called, separated from its figurative relation to the covenant of grace, none was ever eternally saved.

4. That the use of all the *institutions* whereby the old covenant was administered, was to represent and direct to Christ and his mediation.

These things being granted, the only way of life and salvation by Jesus Christ under the Old Testament and the New is secured, which is the substance of the truth wherein we are now concerned.

§9. These things being observed, we may consider that the scripture plainly and expressly makes mention of *two testaments* or covenants; and distinguishes between them in such a way, as what is spoken can hardly be accommodated to a two-fold *administration* of the same covenant. The one is described, Exod.

xxiv, 3—8; Deut. v, 2—5; the other is promised, Jer. xxxi, 31—34.

I shall here propose sundry things relating to the nature of the first covenant, which manifest it to be a distinct covenant, and not a mere administration of the covenant of grace.

This covenant, called the *old*, was never intended to be of itself the absolute rule and law of life and salvation to the church, but was made with a *particular design*, and with respect to particular ends. Hence it follows, that it could abrogate or *disannul* nothing which God at any time before had given as a *general rule* to the church. To clear this matter, we remark,

1. This covenant at Sinai did not *disannul* the *covenant of works*, nor any way fulfil it; and the reason is, because it was never intended to come in the place of it, as a covenant, containing an entire rule of all the faith and obedience of the whole church; yea in sundry things it confirmed that covenant. For it revived the *commands* of it in the decalogue; that being a divine *summary* of the law written in the heart of man at his creation. It revived the *sanction* of it in the sentence of death which it denounced against all transgressors. To which we may add, that it revived the *promise* of the covenant, that of eternal life upon perfect obedience. So the apostle tells us, that Moses thus describeth the righteousness of the law, that “the man which doth these things shall live by them,” Rom. x, 5; Lev. xviii, 5: now this is no other but the covenant of works revived.

2. Neither was the *promise abrogated* by the introduction of this covenant. This promise was given to our first parents immediately after the entrance of sin, and was established as the only way and means of the salvation of sinners; which *could not* be abrogated by the introduction of this covenant, and a *new*

way of justification and salvation be thereby established. For the *promise* being given out in general for the *whole church*, as a GENERAL AND ETERNAL RULE, containing the way appointed by God for righteousness, life, and salvation, it could not be disannulled without a change in the counsels of him, with whom is "no variableness nor shadow of turning." Much less could this be effected by a *particular covenant*, such as that on Sinai was. Yea divers ways it *established* that promise, both at first given, and as afterwards confirmed with the oath of God, to Abraham. It declared the *impossibility* of obtaining reconciliation and peace with God, any other way but by the promise, and by representing the ways and means of *accomplishing the promise*, the death, blood-shedding, and oblation of Christ the promised seed. Wherefore it was so far from disannulling the promise, or diverting the minds of the people of God from it, that by all means it established and conducted to it.

§10. But if it neither abrogated the *first covenant* of works, nor disannulled the *promise* made to Abraham, then to what end did it serve, or what benefit did the church receive thereby?

1. If we had no other answer to this inquiry, but—that in the order of *disposing the seasons* of the church before the *fulness of time*, God in his manifold wisdom was it necessary for the present state of the church in that season, we may well acquiesce therein. But,

2. The apostle acquaints us, in general, with the express *ends* of this divine dispensation, Gal. iii, 19—24, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come," &c. The *promise* being given, there seems to have been no need of it; why then was it *added* to the promise at that season? The "fulness of time" was not yet come, wherein the promise was to be fulfilled;

it was therefore "added, because of *transgressions*," that in the declaration of God's severity against them, some bounds might be fixed to them; "for the knowledge of sin is by the law." It was given moreover to *shut up unbelievers*—such as would not seek for righteousness, life, and salvation by the promise—under the power of the covenant of works, and the curse attending it. It "concluded (or shut up) all under sin," saith the apostle, ver. 20, this was the *end* of the law, for this purpose was it added, as it gave a revival to the covenant of works. Was it then "contrary to the grace of God?" The apostle returns a double answer: although the law doth thus *rebuke* sin, *convince* of sin, and *condemn* for sin, so setting bounds to transgressions, yet God never intended it as a direct means of life and righteousness. The end of the *promise* was, on the contrary, to give righteousness, justification, and salvation by Christ. Wherefore the *promise* and the *law* having *diverse ends*, they are not contrary to one another; for the law had a great respect to the promise, and was given of God for this very end—that it might lead and direct men to Christ. Whilst the covenant of grace was contained and proposed only in the *promise* before it was solemnly confirmed in the blood and sacrifice of Christ, there alone believers sought for them. And whereas this covenant, introduced in the pleasure of God, had a form of outward worship suited to that state of the church; upon the introduction of the new covenant in the "fulness of times" to be the rule of all intercourse between God and the church, both that covenant and all its worship must be *disannulled*. This the apostle proves with all sorts of arguments, manifesting the great advantage of the church thereby.

§11. But how came *this first covenant* to be an especial covenant to the Israelites?

1. This people were the posterity of Abraham, to whom the promise was made, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed." Wherefore from among them was the promised seed to be raised up in its proper season; from among them was the Son of God to take on him the seed of Abraham. To this end were necessary.—That they should have a *certain abiding place* which they might freely inhabit, distinct from other nations, and under a rule of their own. So it is said of them, that "the people should dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations," Numb. xxiii, 9. And "the sceptre was not to depart from them until Shilo came," Gen. xlix, 10. That there should be always kept among them an open confession and *visible representation* of the end for which they were so separated from all the nations of the world. This was the end of all their ordinances of worship, of the tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices, and ordinances; which were all appointed by Moses, on the command of God, "for a testimony of those things which should be spoken afterwards." Heb. iii, 5.

2. It becomes not the wisdom, holiness, and sovereignty of God, to call any people into an especial relation to himself, to do them good in an eminent and peculiar manner, and then to suffer them to live at their pleasure, without any regard to what he had done for them. Wherefore, having granted to the Jews these great privileges of the land of Canaan, and the ordinances of worship relating to the great end mentioned, he moreover prescribed to them laws, rules, and *terms of obedience*, whereon they should hold and enjoy that land, with all the privileges annexed to the possession of it.

3. God would not take this people off from the *promise*, because they could neither please God, nor

be accepted with him, but by faith therein. But yet they were to be dealt with according as it was meet; for they were generally a people of an hard heart, and stiff necked, lifted up with an opinion of their own righteousness and worth above others. For this cause God saw it necessary to put a grievous and heavy *yoke* upon them, to subdue the pride of their spirits, and to cause them to breathe after deliverance.

4. Into this condition God brought them by a *solemn covenant*, confirmed by mutual consent; Exod. xxiv, 8—8; to the terms and conditions of which was the whole church indispensably obliged on pain of extermination, until all was accomplished, Mal. iv, 4—6. To this covenant belonged the decalogue, with all precepts of moral obedience thence educed; their laws of political rule, and their whole system of religious worship. It had also special promises and threatenings annexed, whereof none exceeded the bounds of the land of Canaan. For even many of the *laws* of it were such as obliged *no where else*; as the law of the sabbatical year, their sacrifices, &c. Hence,

5. This covenant thus made, with these ends and promises, did never save nor condemn any man eternally. All that lived under the administration of it, neither attained eternal life, nor perished for ever, by virtue of this covenant as formally such. It revived, indeed, the commanding power and sanction of the first covenant of works, and therein, as the apostle speaks, it was the “ministry of condemnation,” 2 Cor. iii, 9. For by the “deeds of the law can no flesh be justified.” And, on the other hand, it directed to the *promise*, which was the way of life and salvation. What it had of its *own* was confined to things *temporal*. Believers were saved *under* it, but not by *virtue* of it; sinners also perished eternally *under* it, but yet

even that was by the curse of the original law of works. And,

6. Herein occasionally fell out the ruin of that people, "their table became a snare to them, and that which should have been for their welfare became a trap," according to the prediction concerning our Savior, Psal. lxxix, 22. It was this covenant that raised and ruined them; it raised them to glory and honor when given of God; it ruined them when abused by themselves, contrary to the express declarations of his mind and will. They would have this covenant, contrary to its true end, to be the *only rule and means* of righteousness, life, and salvation, Rom. ix, 31—33; chap. x, 3.

This is the *nature and substance* of the covenant which God made with that people; a *particular temporary covenant*, and not a mere dispensation of the covenant of grace.

§12. That which remains for elucidating the mind of the Holy Ghost in this whole matter, is to declare the *differences* there are between these two covenants, whence the one is said to be *better* than the other, and to be "built upon better promises."

1. These two covenants differ in the *circumstance of time* as to their promulgation and establishment; the first was made when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and took its date from the third month after their coming out, Exod. xix, 24. The second from the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the sending of the Holy Ghost.

2. They differ in the *circumstance of place* as to their promulgation; the one was declared on mount *Sinai*, the other was proclaimed from mount *Zion*, and "the law of it went forth from Jerusalem," Isa. ii, 2, 3.

3. They differ in the *manner of their promulgation* and establishment. The first covenant was accompanied with dread and terror on mount Sinai, which filled all the people, yea, Moses himself, with fear and trembling, Heb. xii, 13—21; and it was given by the “ministry and disposition of angels,” Acts vii, 13; Gal. iii, 19. Hence were the people in a sense put in *subjection* to angels, who had an authoritative ministry in that covenant.

Things are quite otherwise in the promulgation of the new covenant. The Son of God in his own person declared it; he spake “from heaven” in a spirit of meekness and condescension, compassion and love.

4. They differ in their *mediators*. The mediator of the first covenant was Moses; but the mediator of the new covenant is the Son of God himself.

5. They differ in their *subject matter*, both as to *precepts* and *promises*, the advantage being still on the part of the new covenant. For the old, in the preceptive part of it, renewed the commands of the covenant of works, and on their original terms, which, absolutely considered, gave no *promise of grace*, to communicate spiritual strength, or to assist us in obedience; nor any of eternal life, but as it was contained in the promise of the covenant of works, “the man that doth these things shall live in them;” to which was subjoined promises of temporal things in the land of Canaan. In the new covenant all things are otherwise, as will be declared in the exposition of the ensuing verses.

6. They differ, and that principally, in the *manner of their dedication*, and their *sanction*. The confirmation of the old covenant was only the sacrifice of beasts, whose blood was sprinkled on all the people, Exod. xxiv, 5—9; but the New Testament was solemnly confirmed by the sacrifice and blood of Christ

himself; Zech. ix, 11; Heb. x, 29; xiii, 20; he dying, as the Mediator and *surety* of the covenant, purchased all good things for the church, and as a *Testator* bequeathed them to it.

7. They differ in the *priests* that were to officiate before God in the behalf of the people. In the old covenant Aaron and his posterity alone were to discharge that office, in the new, the Son of God himself was the only priest of the church.

8. They differ in the *sacrifices* whereon the reconciliation with God, which is tendered in them, depends.

9. They differ in the manner of their *enrollment*. The old covenant, as to the principal and fundamental part of it, was engraven in tables of stones; but the new covenant is written in "the fleshly tables of the heart" of believers, 2 Cor. iii, 3; Jer. xxxi, 33.

10. They differ in their *ends*. The principal end of the Sinai covenant was to *discover sin*, to *condemn*, and to *set bounds* to it. "It was added because of transgressions." The end of the new covenant is, to declare the love, grace, and mercy of God, and therewith to give repentance, remission of sin, and life eternal.

11. They differ in their *effects*. The first covenant, being the ministration of death and condemnation, brought them who were under it into *bondage*; whereas spiritual *liberty* is the immediate effect of the New Testament. And it is declared that this was the great end of bringing in the new covenant, in the accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham—"that we being delivered from the hands of all our enemies, might serve God without fear all the days of our lives," Luke i, 72—75.

12. They differ greatly with respect to the *dispensation of the Holy Ghost*. It is certain that God did

grant the gift of the Holy Spirit under the Old Testament, but it is no less certain that there was always a promise of his more signal effusion upon the establishment of the new covenant. The old covenant was confirmed by dreadful appearances and operations effected by the ministry of angels, but the new by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost himself, who graciously condescended to bear the office of the "*comforter*" of the church.

13. They differ in the *declaration* made in them of the kingdom of God. It is the observation of AUSTIN; "That the very name of the *kingdom of heaven* is peculiar to the New Testament.

14. They differ in their *substance*. The old covenant was *typical* and *shadowy*; the new is substantial and permanent, as containing the body, which is Christ.

15. They differ in the *extent of their administration*, according to the will of God. The one was confirmed to the posterity of Abraham, according to the flesh, and to them especially in the land of Canaan, with some few proselytes that were joined to them; Deut. v, 3; but the administration of the other is extended to all under heaven; none being excluded on account of tongue, language, family, nation, &c. All have an equal interest in the rising sun. The "partition wall is broken down," and the gates of the new Jerusalem are set open to all comers upon the gospel invitation,

16. They differ in their *efficacy*. For the old covenant made nothing perfect, it could *effect* none of the things it *represented*, nor introduce that *complete state* which God had designed for the church.

17. Lastly, They differ in their *duration*; for the one was to remove, and the other to abide for ever. And those who understand not how excellent and glorious those privileges are, which are added to the

covenant of grace as to the Christian *administration* of it are utterly unacquainted with the nature of spiritual and heavenly things.

§13. From the new covenant being established on "*better promises*," the *Socinians* conclude that there were no promises of *life* under the Old Testament. How strange a conclusion! For,

1. The apostle in this place intends only those "*promises*" whereon the New Testament was *legally ratified*, and reduced into the form of a *covenant*; the promises of special pardoning mercy, and the efficacy of grace in the renovation of our natures. But it is granted that the other covenant was *legally established* on *promises* which respected the *land of Canaan*. Wherefore it is granted that, as to the *promises* whereby the covenants were *actually established*, those of the new covenant were *better* than the other.

2. Beside the express promise of eternal life on condition of perfect obedience, which the old covenant had, the *institution of worship* which belonged to it, the whole ministry of the tabernacle, as representing heavenly things, had the nature of a *promise* in them; for they all directed the church to seek for life and salvation in and by Jesus Christ alone.

3. The question is not, what promises are given in the *law itself*, or the old covenant formally considered as such; but *what promise they had* who lived under that covenant, and which were not disannulled by it? For we have proved sufficiently, that the *addition* of this covenant did not abolish or supercede the efficacy of any promise that God hath before given to the church. And to say, that the *first promise*, and that given to *Abraham* confirmed with the oath of God, were not *promises of eternal life*, is to overthrow the whole Bible, both Old Testament and New.

§14. (IV.) From the foregoing exposition we may observe:

1. That the whole office of Christ was designed to the accomplishment of the will and dispensation of the grace of God. For these ends was his "*ministry*" committed to him.

2. The condescension of the Son of God to undertake the office of the "*ministry*" on our behalf, is unspeakable, and for ever to be admired. His *ministry* in the *undertaking* of it was not a dignity, a promotion, a revenue, Matt. xx, 28. It is true, it issued in glory; but not till he had undergone all the evils that human nature is capable of undergoing. How ought we, then, to undergo any thing cheerfully for him, who underwent this laborious ministry for us.

3. The divine Redeemer, by undertaking this office of the "*ministry*," hath consecrated and made honorable that office to all who are rightly called, and who rightly discharge it. It is true, his ministry and ours are not of the same particular nature; but they agree in this, that each of them is a ministry to God, in the holy things of his worship. And considering that Christ himself was God's minister, we have far greater reason to tremble in ourselves on an apprehension of our own *insufficiency* for such an office, than to be discouraged with all the *hardships* and contests we meet with in the world upon its account.

4. The exaltation of the human nature of Christ into the office of this glorious ministry depended solely on the sovereign wisdom, grace, and love of God. And in this designation we may see the example and pattern of our own. For, if it was not on the foresight of the obedience of the human nature of Christ, that he was predestinated and chosen to the grace of the hypostatical union, with the ministry and glory which de-

pended thereon, but of the mere sovereign grace of God; how much less could a foresight of any thing in us, be the cause why God should choose us in him before the foundation of the world!

5. It is our duty and our safety to acquiesce universally and absolutely in the ministry of Jesus Christ. That to which he was so designed in the infinite wisdom and grace of God; that for the discharge of which he was so furnished, by the communication of the Spirit to him in all fulness; that on account of which all other priesthoods were removed; must needs be effectual for all the ends to which it is designed. It may be said, "This is what all men do;" all that are called Christians fully acquiesce in the ministry of Jesus Christ. But if it be so, what mean those other priests and reiterated sacrifices which make up the worship of the church of Rome? If they rest in the ministry of Christ, why do they appoint one of their own to do the same things that he hath done—to offer sacrifice to God?

§15. From what has been said we farther observe:

1. That there is infinite grace in every divine covenant, inasmuch as it is established on *promises*. Infinite condescension it is in God, that he will enter into covenant with poor worms of the earth. And all covenant grace proceeds from, and discovers itself by some undeserved promises. From this divine spring all the streams of grace flow; and this was that which became the goodness and greatness of his nature; these are suitable means whereby we are brought to adhere to him in faith, hope, trust, and obedience. For what is the *use of promises*? It is to keep us in adherence to God, as the first original and spring of all goodness, and the ultimate satisfactory reward of our souls, 2 Cor. vii, 1.

2. The promises of the covenant of grace are *better* than those of any other covenant, especially because the grace of them prevents any condition or qualification on our part. I do not say that the covenant of grace is without conditions, if by "conditions" we intend the duties of obedience which God requireth of us in virtue of that covenant; but this I say, that the *principal promises* thereof are not in the first place *remunerative* of our obedience in the covenant, but rather *efficaciously assumptive* of us into covenant. The covenant of *works* had its *promises*, but they were all *remunerative*, respecting an antecedent obedience in us; and they were indeed also of grace, in that the reward infinitely exceeded the merit of our obedience. But yet they all *supposed* obedience, and the subject of them was formally *reward* only. In the covenant of grace it is not so; for sundry of the promises thereof, are the means of our being *taken into* covenant with God.

§16. Upon the comparative nature of the two covenants observe:

1. That although one state of the church hath had great advantages and privileges above another, yet had no state room to complain, whilst they observed the terms prescribed. We have seen in how many things, and those mostly of the highest importance, the state of the church under the new covenant *excelled* that under the old, yet was that in itself a state of unspeakable grace and privileges. For it was a state of near relation to God by virtue of a covenant; a divine covenant, in itself holy, just, and equal; and even in that state of discipline wherein God was pleased to hold them, they enjoyed the way of life and salvation in the *promise*; for, as we have shewed at large, the prom-

ise was not disannulled by the introduction of this covenant.

2. The state of the gospel, or of the church under the New Testament, being accompanied with the highest spiritual privileges and advantages that it is capable of in this world; thence follow,—the great *obligation* that is incumbent on all believers to all holiness and fruitful obedience to the glory of God; and—the *heinousness of their sin* by whom this covenant is neglected or despised.

VERSE 7.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

§1. Connexion of the words and their general design. §2. The apostle's argument recapitulated. §3, 4. The exposition of the words. §5. Observations.

§1. **I**N this verse, and those that follow to the end of this chapter, the apostle designeth a confirmation of what he had before asserted—that there is a necessity of a new and better covenant, accompanied with better promises, and more excellent ordinances of worship than the former.

What he had before confirmed in sundry particular instances, he summarily concludes in one general argument in this verse, an argument built on a principle generally acknowledged. And it is this; all the privileges and advantages of the Aaronical priesthood and sacrifices belonged to the *covenant* to which they were annexed; a chief part of its outward administrations consisting in them. This the Hebrews could not question. Wherefore, that priesthood, (with all the worship belonging to the tabernacle or temple) was necessarily commensurate to that covenant. But there

is mention of *another covenant* to be made with the whole church, and to be introduced long after the making of that at Sinai. Neither could that be denied by them. However, to put it out of controversy, the apostle proves it by an express testimony of the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxxi, 31—34.

From this well grounded supposition the apostle proves, that the first covenant is *imperfect, blameable, and removeable*; for where once a covenant is made and established, if it will *effect all* that he who makes it designs, and if it will exhibit all the good which he intends to communicate, there is no reason why another covenant should be made. The making of a new for no other ends or purposes but what the old was every way sufficient for, argues a wanton mutability in him that makes it. Wherefore the promise of another covenant doth irrefragably prove, that the first, and all the services of it, were *imperfect*, and therefore to be *taken away*.

§2. Indeed the promise of a new covenant diverse from that made at Sinai, or *not like* it, as the prophet speaks, is sufficient of itself to overthrow the vain pretences of the Jews, wherein they are hardened to this day. The absolute perpetuity of the law and its worship, that is, of the covenant at Sinai, is the principal fundamental article of their present faith, or rather unbelief. But this is framed by them in direct opposition to the promises of God. For let it be demanded of them, whether they believe that God will make *another* covenant with the church, not according to the covenant which he made with their fathers at Sinai? If they shall say they “do not believe it,” then do they plainly renounce the prophets, and the divine promises given by them; if they do grant it, I desire to know of them, with what *sacrifices* that new covenant should

be established, by what *priest*, with what *worship*, it shall be administered. If they say that they shall be done by the sacrifices, priests, and worship of the law, they deny what they granted before—that it is a new and another covenant. For the sacrifices and priests of the law cannot confirm or administer any other covenant but that to which they are already confined. If it be granted that this new covenant must have a new mediator, a new priest, a new sacrifice, as it is undeniable it must, or it cannot be a *new* covenant, then must the old cease, and be *removed*, that this may come into its place. Nothing but obstinacy and blindness can resist the force of this argument.

§3. The general design of the apostle in this verse being declared, we may consider the words more particularly. “For if that first covenant had been blameless;” (ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη) *that first*; that is, (πρωτέρα διαθήκη) “that former covenant;” the covenant made with the fathers at Sinai, with all the ordinances of worship thereunto belonging, (Εἰ ἀμεμπτος ἦν) “if it had been *faultless*;” we must ascertain the signification of the word from the subject matter treated of in this place; which is the *perfection and consummation*, on the sanctification and salvation, of the church. And it is with respect to this alone he asserts the insufficiency and imperfection of the first covenant. The inquiry between him and the Hebrews was not whether the first covenant was not *in itself* good, just, holy, and blameless, every way perfect with respect to its own special ends; but whether it was perfect and effectual to the general ends mentioned. The art of *arithmetic*, if properly taught, is sufficient to instruct a learner in the whole science of *numeration*; if not, it is faulty as to its *particular* end; but it is no way sufficient to the *general* end of making a man wise in the *whole* com-

pass of wisdom; be it never so perfect in its own kind. Thus in the *latter* sense only the apostle affirms that the first covenant was not (*αμεμπτος*) *blameless*.

In brief, what the apostle designeth to prove is—that the first covenant was of that constitution, that it could not accomplish the perfect administration of the grace of God to the church, nor was ever *designed* to that end, as the Jews then *falsely*, and their posterity still *foolishly* imagine.

§4. “Then should no place have been sought for the second.” (*Ουκ αν δευτερας εξηλειτο τοπος.*) His argument is plainly this: The promise of a *new covenant* doth unavoidably prove the insufficiency of the former, at least as to the *ends* for which the new one is promised. For otherwise, to what end serves the *promise*, and the *covenant* promised? But there is some difficulty in the mode of expression. “The place of the second had not been sought;” so the words lie in the original. But, “the place of the second,” is no more but “the second taking place,” the introduction and establishment of it. And this is said to be “sought,” improperly, after the manner of men. When men have entered into a covenant which proves *insufficient* for some end proposed, they take counsel and *seek out* other ways and means, and covenant on such other terms as may be effectual to their purpose.

§5. From what has been said we may observe;

1. That whatever God had done before for the church, yet he ceased not in his wisdom and grace until he had made it partaker of the best and most blessed condition whereof, in this world, it is capable. He found out a place for this *better* covenant.

2 Let those, to whom the terms of the new covenant are proposed in the gospel, take heed to themselves, that they sincerely embrace and improve them;

for there is neither promise, nor hopes of any farther or fuller administration of divine grace.

VERSE 8.

For finding fault with them, he saith, behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

§1, 2. (I.) The connexion and design of the passage, and the words explained. §3. The subject matter of the promise; a covenant. §4. Its author. §5. With whom the covenant made. §6. The manner of making it. §7—9. (II.) Observations.

§1. (I.) **I**N this verse the apostle entereth upon the proof of his argument laid down in that foregoing; viz. that the first covenant was not (*αμεμπτος*) *unblamable*, or every way sufficient for God's general end, because there was room left for the introduction of another. "For finding fault with them, he saith," (*γὰρ*) *for*; the reason it intimates doth not consist in the word wherewith it is joined, "*finding fault with them*;" but respects those following, *he saith*: "*for he saith, the days come*;" which directly proves what he had affirmed. The new covenant was not to be introduced absolutely without the consideration of any thing foregoing; but because the first was not *unblamable*. He did it "*finding fault with them*." Place the note of distinction at (*αυτοις*) *them*, and then the sense of the words is rightly expressed in our English translation; "*for finding fault with them (that is, the people) he saith*;" and (*αυτοις*) *them* may be regulated either by (*μεμφομενος*) *finding fault*, or (*λεγει*) *he saith*. Although the first covenant was not every way perfect, with respect to God's *general end* towards his church, yet, it may be, it is not so safe to say, that God *complained of it*; whereas God in this testimony *actually*

complains of the *people*, that they "brake his covenant," and expresseth his indignation thereon, "he regarded them not." To which we may add, in favor of this interpretation, that there is an especial remedy expressed in the testimony against the *evil* which God *complains* of, or *finds fault* with, in the *people*; which was, that "they continued not in his covenant." Wherefore, God gives this promise of a *new covenant*, together with a complaint against the *people*, that it might be known to be an effect of free and sovereign grace.

§2. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord." (בְּהִינֵה הַיָּמִים, *Behold*. It is always found eminent either in itself, or in some of its circumstances, and calls for more than ordinary attention to what is proposed. It was needful to *signalize* this promise; for the people to whom it was given were with great difficulty drawn from their adherence to the old covenant, which was inconsistent with that now promised. And this new covenant is here proposed so evidently and plainly, in the entire nature and properties of it, that unless men wilfully turn away their eyes, they cannot but see it. (Ἡμεραι ἐρχονται) *the days come*. Known to God are all things and ways from the foundation of the world, and he hath determined the *time* of their accomplishment. Under the Old Testament, the *days of the Messiah* were called "the world to come," chap. ii, 5; and it was a periphrasis of him, that he was (ὁ ἐρχόμενος, Matt. xi, 3. "He that was to come." And this is the time here intended. The expression in the original is in the present tense, from the Hebrew (יָמִים בָּאִים) *the days coming*; denoting the *near approach* of the days intended and a *certainty* of the thing itself,—*"Saith the Lord."* He who complaineth

of the people for breaking the old covenant, promiseth to make the new.

§3. The subject matter of the promises given is a "covenant," or rather (ברית, *Sept. διαθηκη*) a *testament*. For if we take "covenant" in a strict and proper sense, it hath indeed no place between God and man. For a covenant, strictly taken, ought to proceed on *equal terms*, and a proportionable consideration of things on both sides. But the covenant of God is founded on *grace*, and consists essentially in a free undeserved *promise*. Such a covenant is here intended as is ratified and confirmed by the *death* of him that makes it, which is properly a *testament*: And this covenant was confirmed by the death of the *testator*, and the blood of a *sacrifice*; it is a covenant in which he that makes it, bequeatheth his goods to others by way of a *legacy*. Wherefore, our Savior calls it the "new testament in his blood." And even the covenant which God made with the church of Israel at Sinai was called a "*testament*" for three reasons:

1. Because it was confirmed by the *death* of the sacrifices that were slain and offered at the solemn establishment of it. So saith our apostle; "the first testament was not dedicated without blood," chap. ix, 15.

2. God therein granted to the church of Israel the good things of the land of Canaan, with the privileges of his worship.

3. The principal reason of this denomination, "*the old testament*," is taken from its being typically significative of the death and legacy of the great Testator. There is in the new covenant a *recapitulation* of all promises of grace; it implies the actual exhibition of Christ in the flesh; it was ratified by his death and bloodshedding, including all his mediatorial works, and all ordinances of Christian worship.

§4. Next is observable, the *author* of this covenant; 'I will make, saith the Lord.' God himself is the principal party covenanting; therefore what he doth is (*ex mera gratia et voluntate*) "from mere grace and good will." There was no cause without himself for which he should make it; which we are here eminently taught, where he expresseth no other occasion of his making this covenant, by the *sins of the people* in breaking the former; expressed on purpose to declare the free and sovereign grace, the goodness, love, and mercy, which alone were the absolute springs of this covenant.

§5. The *promises with whom* this covenant is made are, "the house of Israel, and the house of Judah." Long before the giving of this promise that people were divided into two parts. The one part consisted of the *ten tribes* which fell off from the house of David, under the conduct of *Ephraim*, whence they are also in the prophets called by that name. The other, consisting of the tribe properly so called, with that of Benjamin, and the greatest part of Levi, took the name of *Judah*; and with them, both the promise and the church remained in a peculiar manner. But whereas they all originally sprang from Abraham, who received the promise and sign of circumcision for them all, and because they were all equally in their forefathers brought into the bond of the old covenant, they are here mentioned distinctly, that none of the seed of Abraham might be excluded from the tender of this covenant. Wherefore this "house of *Israel*, and of *Judah*," may be considered two ways:—as that people were the whole entire posterity of Abraham; and—as they were typical, and mystically significant of the whole church of God. The house of *Judah* was, at the time of giving the promise, in the sole pos-

session of all the privileges of the old covenant; *Israel*, having cut off themselves by their revolt from the house of David, being cast out also for their sins amongst the heathen. But God, to declare that the covenant he designed had no respect to those carnal privileges which were then in the possession of Judah alone, but only to the promise made to Abraham, equals all his seed with respect to the mercy of this covenant. But in a typical sense, the whole church of elect believers is intended under these denominations. To these alone, whether Jews or Gentiles, is the grace of it actually communicated.

§6. The manner of making this covenant is next observable: (*συντελεσσω*, *perfician*, *consummabo*) "*I will perfect*," or *consummate*, to the exclusion of all additions and alterations. Perfection and unalterable establishment are the properties of this covenant. An "everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure."

As to its distinguishing characters, it is called a "*new covenant*;" being such with respect to the "*old covenant*" made at Sinai: wherefore by *this covenant*, as here considered, is not understood the *promise* of grace given to *Adam* absolutely; or that to *Abraham*, which contained the substance and matter of it; but the establishment of it, as before described, with its law of worship. Howbeit it may be called a "*new covenant*," because of its *eminency*; as it is said of an *eminent* work of God, "Behold I work a *new* thing in the earth;" and the epithet may denote its duration and *continuance* as what shall never wax old.

§7. (II.) Hence we may observe,

1. God hath oftentimes just cause to complain of his people, when yet he will not utterly cast them off.

2. It is the duty of the church to take deep notice of God's complaints of them; which we observe from

God's complaining or "finding fault" with them. It is the special duty of all churches, and all believers, to search diligently into what God finds fault with, in his word; and, as far as they find themselves guilty, to be deeply affected therewith.

3. God often surpriseth the church with promises of grace and mercy. When God here "findeth fault" with the people, it might have been expected that he would proceed to their utter rejection; but instead of that, he surpriseth them, as it were, with the most eminent promise of grace and mercy that was ever made to them,—in order to glorify the riches and freedom of his grace; and—that none, possessed of the least remainder of sincerity, may faint and despond, though under the greatest confluence of discouragements.

§8. Observe farther the following particulars:

1. "*The Lord saith*," is the formal object of our faith and obedience. All other foundations of faith, as thus saith the *pope*; or thus saith the *church*; or thus said our *ancestors*; are all but delusions. "Thus saith the Lord," gives rest and peace.

2. Where God placeth a note of observation and attention, we should carefully fix our faith and consideration. God sets not any of his marks in vain. And if, upon the first view of any thing so *signalized*, the evidence of it doth not appear, we have a sufficient call to a farther diligence in our inquiry.

3. All the concernments of the new covenant are objects of the best of our consideration; which observation is sufficiently confirmed from the next verse.

4. There is a time limited and fixed for the accomplishment of all divine promises, and all the purposes of divine grace towards the church; which may teach us to search diligently into that wisdom by which God

hath disposed of times and seasons to his own glory, and to the trial and ultimate benefit of the church.

§9. Respecting the preceding account of the new covenant observe,

1. The new covenant—as collecting into one all the promises of grace given from the foundation of the world, accomplished in the actual exhibition of Christ, and confirmed in his death, and by the sacrifice of his blood, thereby becoming the sole rule of new spiritual ordinances of worship suited thereunto—was the great object of the faith of the saints of the Old Testament, and is the great foundation of all our present mercies.

2. All the efficacy and glory of the new covenant originally arose from, and are resolved into, the author and supreme cause of it—God himself. “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!” How glorious art thou in the ways of thy grace towards poor sinful creatures, who had destroyed themselves! He hath made no *created* good, but is *himself* our reward.

3. The covenant of grace in Christ is made only in behalf of the Israel of God, the church of the elect; but in respect of the *outward dispensation* of the covenant, it is extended beyond the effectual communication of its grace. Hence the privilege of Abraham’s carnal seed.

4. Those who are *first* and most advanced, as to outward privileges, are oftentimes *last* and least advantaged by the grace of them; thus was it with the two houses of Israel and Judah. They had the privilege and pre-eminence above all nations of the world, as to the *first tender*, and all the benefits of the outward dispensation of the covenant; yet, though the number of them was as the sand of the sea, a remnant only was saved.

VERSE 9.

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

§1. Connexion and design of the words. §2. The covenant made with the fathers. §3. The time and manner of making it. §4. The reason of God's rejecting Israel. §5. His not regarding them, what. §6, 7. Observations.

§1. **G**OD before made a covenant with his people, a good and holy covenant, such as was meet for God to prescribe, and for them thankfully to accept of; yet notwithstanding all its privileges and advantages, it proved not so *effectual*, but that multitudes of them were deprived even of the temporal benefits included in it. Wherefore, though hereon God promiseth to make a "new covenant" with them, seeing they had forfeited and lost the advantage of the former, yet if it should be of the *same kind* therewith, it might also in like manner prove ineffectual.

To obviate this objection, God declares it shall not be of the *same kind* with the former, nor liable to be so frustrated as that was. These two things being the only reason that God gives, why he will make this new covenant, namely, the *sins* of the people, and the *insufficiency* of the first covenant to bring the church into that blessed state which he designed; it is manifest that all his dealings with them for their spiritual and eternal good, are of mere sovereign grace.

§2. "Not according to the covenant I made with their fathers." (Την διαθήκην ἣν ἐποίησα) "The covenant which *I made*." There is in these verses a repetition three times of *making covenant*; and in every place in the *Hebrew* the same words are used, (ברית בריתי) but

the apostle changeth the *verb* in every place. Here he useth (εποίησα) "*I made*," in reference to that covenant which the people brake, and God disannulled; perhaps to distinguish their *alterable* covenant from that which was to be *unalterable*, chap xii, 27. The change of the things that are shaken, is (ως πεποιημένων,) "as of things that are made;" so made as to abide only for an appointed time. (Πατράσιν αὐτῶν) *With their fathers*. Their *progenitors* were those of whom this people always boasted, and desired no more but what might descend in the right of these fathers. And to this God here sends them—to let them know that he had more grace and mercy to communicate to the church, than ever these fathers of theirs were made partakers of; so would he take them off from boasting; and—to give warning by their faithless fathers, who perished in the wilderness, how they behaved themselves under the tender of this new and greater mercy

§3. (Εν ἡμέρᾳ, i. e. ἐκείνῃ) *in that day*. That "*a day*" is taken in scripture for an especial time and season, wherein any work or duty is to be performed, is obvious to all. "In the ~~day~~," therefore, is at that great eminent season so famous throughout all their generations, (Ἐπιλαβομενε μὴ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν, ῥῆμα) "that I *firmly laid hold* of their hand." Wherein is intimated the woful helpless condition they were in when in Egypt. So far were they from being able to deliver themselves out of their captivity and bondage, that, like children, they were not able to stand or move, unless God took them, and led them by the hand. So he speaks, Hos. xi, 3, "I taught them to go, taking them by the arms." And certainly never were weakly froward children so awkward to stand and to go of

themselves, as that people were to comply with God in the work of their deliverance.

It is therefore no new thing, that the church of God should be in a condition of itself able neither to stand nor go. But yet, if God will take them by the hand for their help, deliverance shall ensue. It expresseth the infinite condescension of God towards this people, in that condition,—“a bowing down to take them by the hand;” (though to their enemies a work of tremendous power, the *lifting up* of his hand) and we know in how many instances they endeavored frowardly and obstinately to wrest themselves out of the hand of God, and to have cast themselves into utter destruction. Oh! that our souls might live in a constant admiration of that divine grace and patience which his chosen live upon; and that the remembrance of the times and seasons wherein, if God had not strengthened his hand upon us, we had utterly destroyed ourselves, might increase that admiration daily, and enliven it with thankful obedience. This deliverance of Israel was *gloriously typical*, and representative of their own and the whole church’s spiritual deliverance from sin and hell; from our bondage to Satan, and a glorious introduction into the liberty of the sons of God. And therefore did the Lord engrave the memorials of it on the tables of stone; “I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” For what was typified and signified thereby, is the principal motive to obedience throughout all generations.

Thus great on all accounts was the *day*, and the *glory* of it, wherein God made the old covenant with the people of Israel, yet had it no glory in comparison of that which excelleth. The light of the sun of righteousness and glory is on *our day* “*sevenfold*, as the

light of seven days," Isa. xxx, 26, a *perfection* of light and glory was to flow into it.

§4. "Because they continued not in my covenant." The Hebrew word (אשר) *which*, is rendered (כי) *because*, but the *reason* why God made this new covenant not according to the former, was not properly because they abode not in the first; wherefore I had rather render the Greek particle in this place by "*which*," as we render the Hebrew in the prophet, "*which* my covenant they abode not in;" or, "*for* they abode not." If, however, we render it "*because*," it respects not God's making a new covenant, but his rejecting them for breaking the old. (Οὐκ ἐνεμείναν) *they continued not*, they abode not in the covenant made with them. This God calls *his* covenant; they continued not in "my covenant;" because he was the author of it, the sole contriver and proposer of its terms and promises (בטל) *they brake*, they *rescinded*, removed it, made it void. The people, though they accepted of God's covenant, and the terms of it, (Moses having ascended again into the mount) made a golden calf. Wherefore the breaking of the covenant, or their not continuing in it, was primarily, and principally, the making of the molten calf. After this, indeed, that generation added many other sins and provocations, but it is their sin who *personally* first entered into covenant with God, that is reflected on. That generation with whom God made that first covenant, immediately "*brake*" it, continued not in it; and therefore let that generation look well to itself to which this *new* covenant shall be *first proposed*.

§5. "And I regarded them not." There seems to be a great difference in the translation of the words of the prophet, and these of the apostle taken from them. In the former place we read, "although I was an husband

to them;" in this, "I regarded them not." Nothing of the *main controversy*, nothing of the substance of the truth which the apostle approves and confirms by this testimony, doth any way depend on the precise signification of these words. Take the two *different senses* which the words as commonly translated convey, and there is nothing of *contradiction*, or indeed the least disagreement between them. For the words of the prophet, as we have translated them, *express an aggravation* of the sin of the people. They broke my covenant, "although I was (in that covenant) an husband to them," exercising singular kindness and care towards them. And, as they are rendered by the apostle, they express the *effect* of that sin so aggravated. "He regarded them not;" that is, with the same tenderness as formerly; for he denied to go with them as before, and exercised severity towards them in the wilderness until they were consumed. Each way the design is, to shew that the covenant was *broken* by them, and that they were dealt with accordingly.

The apostle neither in this, nor in any other place, doth bind himself precisely to the *translation of the words*, but infallibly gives us the sense and meaning, and so he hath done in this place. For whereas the Hebrew word (בעל) signifies an *husband*, or to be an husband or a lord, and the Hebrew letter (ב) being added to it in construction, as here (בעלתי בם) it is as much as (*Jure usus sum Maritali*) "I exercised the *right*, power, and authority of an husband towards them;" I dealt with them as an husband with a wife that breaketh covenant; that is, saith the apostle, "I regarded them not," with the love, tenderness, and affection of an husband; (λεγει Κυριος) *saith the Lord*; these words have a peculiar pathos, as closing the sentence, and respect only the sin of the people, and his

consequent dealing with them; "I regarded them not as a wife any more, *saith the Lord*.

Now God uttereth his severity towards them, that they might consider how he will deal with all those who despise, break, or neglect his covenant. So, *saith he*, I dealt with them, and so shall I deal with others who offend in like manner. They received it, entered solemnly into the bonds of it, took upon themselves expressly the performance of its terms and conditions, were sprinkled with the blood of it, but they continued not in it, and were dealt with accordingly; for God used the right and authority of an husband with whom a wife breaketh covenant; he neglected them, shut them out of his house, deprived them of their dowry or inheritance, and (his authority being ultimate and absolute) slew them in the wilderness.

Hence he says of it, (*καὶ κατὰ τὴν*) "not according to it;" a covenant agreeing with the former neither in promises, efficacy, nor duration. It is neither a renovation of that covenant, nor a reformation of it, but utterly of another nature.

§6. (II.) From the whole we may observe:

1. The grace and glory of the new covenant are much manifested by comparing it with the old; which God does here on purpose for the illustration of it.

2. *All* God's works are equally good and holy in themselves, but, as to the use and advantage of the church, he is pleased to make some of them means of communicating *more grace* than others. Even this covenant to which the new was not to be similar, was in itself good and holy, and which those with whom it was made had no reason to complain of; howbeit God hath ordained that by another covenant, he would communicate the *fulness* of his grace and love to the church.

3. Though God makes an alteration in any of his *works*, or institutions, yet he never changeth his *intention*, or the purpose of his will. In all outward changes there is with him "no variableness nor shadow of turning." Known to him are all his works from the foundation of the world; and whatever change there seems to be in them, it is all effected in pursuance of his unchangeable purpose.

4. The disposal of mercies and privileges, as to person, seasons, &c. is wholly in the hand and power of God. Some be granted to the fathers, some to their posterity, and not the same to both. It is our wisdom to improve what we enjoy; not to repine at what God hath done for others, or will do for them that shall come after us. Our present mercies are sufficient for us if we know how to use them:

§7. The following observations may be added.

1. That sins have their aggravations from mercies received. This was what rendered this first sin of that people of such a flagitious nature in itself, and so provoking to God, *viz.* that they who personally contracted the guilt of it, had newly received the honor, and merciful privilege of being taken into covenant with God. Let us therefore take heed how we sin against received mercies, especially spiritual privileges, such as we enjoy by the gospel.

2. Nothing but *effectual grace* will secure our covenant obedience one moment. And in the *new covenant* this grace is promised in a peculiar manner, as we shall see on the next verse.

3. No covenant between God and man ever was or ever could be effectual, as to the *immediate* ends of it, that was not made and "confirmed in Christ." God first made a covenant with us in Adam; in him we all sinned by breach of covenant. So was the *other cove-*

nant immediately broken; and they who suppose that the efficacy and stability of the *present* covenant solely depend on our own *will and diligence*, had need not only to assert that our nature is free from that *depravation* which it was under when this covenant was broken, but also from that *defectibility* that was in it before we fell in Adam. And such as, neglecting the interposition of Christ, betake themselves to imaginations of this kind, surely know little of themselves, and less of God.

4. No external administration of a covenant of God's own making, no obligation of mercy on the minds of men, can enable them to steadfastness in covenant obedience, without an effectual influence of grace from Jesus Christ. For we shall see, in the next verses, that this is the only provision which divine Wisdom has made to answer this important end.

5. God in making a covenant with any, in proposing the terms of it, retains his right and authority to deal with persons according to their deportment. "They brake my covenant, and I regarded them not."

6. God's casting men out of his special care upon the breach of his covenant, is the highest judgment that in this world can befall any persons.

And we are concerned in all these things. For although the covenant of grace be stable and effectual to all who are really partakers of it, yet as to its *external administration*, and our entering into it by a visible profession, it may be broken to the temporal and eternal ruin of persons and whole churches. "Take heed of the golden calf."

VERSES 10—12.

For this is the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

§1. The general argument, and contents of these verses. §2. (1.) The words explained. §3. The new covenant in a sense unconditional. §4 Its author, and introduction. §5. Introduced gradually. §6--10 The nature of it in its promises, which are not conditional. §11 Primarily made with Christ §12. The nature of the mutual covenant relation. §13--17 The nature of the teaching denied, and that promised §8, 19. The forgiveness of sins. §20--22. (II) Observations. §23, 24 On the teaching, and the knowledge of God. §25. Concerning sin and its pardon.

§1. **T**HE apostle's *general argument* must still be borne in mind; which is to prove, that the Lord Christ is the Mediator and surety of a *better covenant* than that wherein the service of God was managed by the legal high priests; for hence it follows that his *priesthood* is greater and far more excellent than theirs. To this end he not only proves that God promised to *make* such a covenant, but also declares its *nature and properties* in the words of the prophet, Jer. xxxi, 33; and so by comparing it with the former covenant, he shews its superior excellency. In particular, in this testimony the imperfection of that covenant is demonstrated from its *issue*. For it did not effectually continue peace and mutual love between God and the people; but, being broken by them, they were thereon rejected of God. This rendered all the other benefits of it useless; wherefore the properties here insisted on infallibly prevent the like issue, securing the people's obedience for ever, and so the love and relation of God to them as "their God." Wherefore these three ver-

ses give us a *description* of the Christian covenant as to those *properties and effects* wherein it differs from the former. That covenant was broken, but this never shall be.

§2. (I.) The thing promised is a “covenant (ברית, διαθηκη) and the way of making it, as in the *prophet* (אכרת) to cut, to strike, to divide. It respects the sacrifices wherewith covenants were confirmed. Thence also where *fedus percutere*, and *fedus ferire*, see Gen. xv, 9, 10, 18. The *apostle* renders the word (διαθησσομαι τι υμιν) with a dative case without a preposition. *I will make, or confirm to the house of Israel.*”

We render the words (ברית and διαθηκη,) in this place, by a “covenant,” though afterwards the same word is translated by a “testament.” In the description of a covenant here annexed there is no mention of any *condition* on the part of man, of any terms of obedience prescribed to him, but the whole consists in *free, gratuitous promises*. Some conclude it is only *one part* of the covenant that is here described; others that the whole covenant of grace, *as absolute*, without any condition on our part is intended; but these things must be farther inquired into.

§3. 1. The word *berith* used by the prophet, doth not only signify a *covenant*, or compact, properly so called; but also a free gratuitous *promise*, Jer, xxxiii, 20, 25; Gen. ix, 10, 11. Nothing can be argued for the necessity of conditions to belong to this covenant from the *term* whereby it is expressed in the prophet.

The *making* of it also is declared by a word (כרת) that doth not require a *mutual stipulation*; and it is applied to a mere gratuitous promise, Gen. xv, 18. “In that day did God *make a covenant* with Abraham, saying, to thy seed will *I give this land.*” Besides, the Greek word (διαθηκη) signifies properly a *testamen-*

tary disposition. And this every one knows, may be without any *conditions* on the part of them to whom any thing is bequeathed.

2. The *whole* covenant intended is expressed in the ensuing description of it. If otherwise, it could not be proved from thence, that this covenant was *more excellent* than the former, the principal thing which the apostle here designs to prove; and the want of observing this hath led many expositors out of the way.

3. It is evident there can be *no condition* previously required, in order to our *entering into* this covenant antecedent to the making of it with us.

4. It is certain, that in its *outward dispensation*, wherein the grace, mercy and terms of it are proposed, many things are required of us in order to a participation of the benefits. For God hath ordained, that all the mercy and grace prepared in it shall be communicated to us, ordinarily, in the use of *outward means*. To this end hath he appointed all the ordinances of the gospel, the word, sacraments, &c. Wherefore these things are *required of us* by way of *duty*, in order to our participation of covenant benefits. And if any will call our attendance to such duties, "*the condition of the covenant,*" it is not to be contended about, though properly it is not so. For God communicates the covenant of grace antecedently to all ability to perform any duties; as it is with elect infants.

5. It is evident, that the *first grace* of the covenant, or God's putting his law in our hearts, can depend on no condition on our part. For whatever is antecedent thereto, being only a work of corrupt nature, can be no condition on the performance of which the first grace is superadded.

6. To a full and complete interest in all the promises of the covenant, *faith*, on our part from which

evangelical repentance is inseparable, is required. But whereas these also are wrought in us by virtue of that grace of the covenant which is absolute, it is a mere strife about words to contend whether they may be called conditions or no.

7. Although (*διαθήκη*) the word here used may signify, and be rightly rendered, a *covenant*, (as *ברית* doth,) yet that which is intended is properly a *testament*, or a testamentary disposition of good things. It is the will of God by Jesus Christ, his death and bloodshedding, to give us freely the whole inheritance of grace and glory. Hence, under this notion, the covenant is unconditional.

§4. The *author* of this covenant is God himself: "I will make it *saith the Lord*." This is the third time that the expression, "saith the Lord," is repeated in this testimony. The work expressed in both the parts of it, the disannulling of the old covenant, and the establishment of the new, is such as calls for this solemn interposition of the authority, veracity, and grace of God. And the mention of it thus frequently is to beget a reverence in us of the work which he so emphatically assumes to himself. *Note*, The abolishing of the old covenant, with the introduction and the establishment of the new, is an act of the mere sovereign wisdom, grace, and authority of God. It is his gratuitous disposal of us, and of his own grace. "With the house of Israel." In ver: 8, they are called distinctly "the house of Israel, and the house of Judah;" here they are all jointly expressed by their ancient name of Israel, to manifest that all distinctions on the account of preceding privileges should be now taken away, that all Israel might be saved. But as we have shewed before, the whole Israel of God, or the church of the elect, are principally intended. "After those

days." There are various conjectures about the sense of these words, or the determination of the time limited in them. Some suppose it respects the time of giving the law on mount Sinai; some think that respect is had to the captivity of Babylon, and the people's return from thence; and some judge they refer to what went immediately before, "and I regarded them not:" but "after those days," is as much as *in those days*; an indeterminate season for a certain. So, "in that day," is frequently used in the prophets, Isa. xxiv, 21, 22; Zech. xii, 11; a time therefore certainly future, but not determined, is at least intended. And herewith most expositors are satisfied. Yet is there, as I judge, *more* in the words: *those days* seem to me to comprise the *whole time* allotted to the œconomy of the old covenant. But yet the *whole of it* cannot be limited to any *one* season *absolutely*, as though all that was intended in God's making of it consisted in any one individual act. The making of the old covenant with the fathers is said to be "in the day wherein God took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt." During the season intended there were many things that were *preparatory* to its making, or solemn establishment; so was it also in making of the new covenant. It was *gradually* made and established, and that by sundry acts preparatory for it, or confirmatory of it.

§5. I. The first peculiar entrance into it was made by the ministry of John the Baptist; hence his ministry is called "the beginning of the gospel," Mark i, 1, 2: until his coming, the people were bound absolutely and universally to the covenant in Horeb, without alteration or addition in any ordinance of worship. But his ministry was designed to *prepare* them, and to cause them to look out after the accomplishment of

this promise of making the new covenant, Mal. iv, 4—6.

2. The coming in the flesh, and personal ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, was an eminent advance in it. Hence upon his nativity this covenant was proclaimed from heaven, as that which was immediately to take place, Luke ii, 13, 14; but it was more fully and evidently carried on, in a *preparatory* view, by his personal ministry.

3. The way for the introduction of this covenant being thus prepared, it was solemnly enacted and confirmed by his *death*; for then he offered that to God whereby it was established. And hereby the promise properly become (*διαθήκη*) a *testament*, as our apostle proves at large, chap. ix, 14—16. This was the centre wherein all the promises of grace met, and from whence they derived their efficacy. From henceforward the old covenant, and all its administrations, having received their full accomplishment, continued only in the *patience* of God, to be taken down and removed out of the way in his own time and manner. For really, and in themselves, their authoritative force was then taken away; see Eph. ii, 14—16; Col. ii, 14, 15. But though our obligation to obedience, and the observance of commands, be formally and ultimately resolved into the *will* of God; yet immediately it respects the *revelation* of it, by which we are directly obliged. Wherefore, although the causes of the removal of the old covenant had already existed, yet the law and its institutions were still continued not only lawful but useful to the worshippers, until the will of God concerning their abrogation was *fully declared*.

4. This new covenant had the *complement* of its formation and establishment in the *resurrection* of

Christ. Until the curse of the law shall be undergone, it could not quit its claim to power over sinners; and as this curse was undergone in the *sufferings*, so it was absolutely discharged in the *resurrection* of Christ. For the pains of death being loosed, and he delivered from the state of the dead, the sanction of the law was declared to be void, and its curse answered. Hereby did the old covenant so expire, as that the worship which belonged to it was only for awhile continued by the forbearance of God towards that people.

5. The first solemn *promulgation* of this new covenant, so made, ratified, and established, was on the *day of Pentecost*, seven weeks after our Lord's resurrection. And it answered the promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, the same space of time having intervened after the deliverance of the people out of Egypt. From this day forward the ordinances of worship, and all the institutions of the new covenant, became obligatory to all believers. Then was the whole church absolved from any duty with respect to the old covenant, and the worship of it, though as yet it was not manifest in their consciences.

6. The question being stated about the continuance of the obligatory force of the old covenant, the contrary was solemnly promulged by the apostles under the infallible conduct of the Holy Ghost, Acts xv.

These were the *degrees of the time* intended in that expression, "after those days," all of them answering the several degrees by which the old vanished and disappeared.

§6. The circumstance of making this covenant being thus declared, the nature of it in its *promises* is next proposed to us. On this important point let it be remarked,

1. It is the *event*, or the *effect* itself, that is directly promised, and not any such efficacy of means as might be frustrated. For the weakness and imperfection of the first covenant was, that those with whom it was made *continued not* in it. Hereon God *neglected* them; and to redress this evil, to prevent the like for the future, that is, effectually to provide that God and his people may always abide in that blessed covenant relation, he promiseth the *things themselves*, whereby it might be secured. What the first could not effect, God promised to work by the new.

2. It is no where intimated, that the efficacy of the new covenant, and the accomplishment of its promises, should depend on our *reason*, or *natural principles*, but is universally and constantly ascribed to the efficacy of the spirit and grace of God, not only enabling us to obedience, but enduing us with a spiritual, supernatural principle, from which it may proceed.

3. It is true, that *our own wills*, or the free actings of them, are required in our faith and obedience; whence it is promised, that we shall “be willing in the day of his power;” but that our wills are left absolutely to their own liberty and power, in this matter, without being inclined and *determined by divine grace*, is that proud and impotent *Pelagianism* which hath long attended the church, but which shall never absolutely prevail.

4. The contrary supposition overthrows the *nature* of the new covenant, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which comes by it. For if the *effect* itself, or the thing mentioned, are not promised, but only the *use of means* left to the liberty of men’s wills, whether they will comply with them or no, then the very being of the covenant, whether it shall ever have any existence

or no, depends absolutely on the *wills of men*, and so may not be.

The Lord Christ would be made hereby the Mediator of an *uncertain covenant*. For if it depends absolutely on the wills of men, whether they will accept the terms of it or no, it is *uncertain* what will be the event, and whether any one will do so or no. For the will being not determined by grace, what its actings will be is altogether uncertain. It would on this supposition follow, that God might fulfil his promise of putting his laws into the minds of men, and writing them in their hearts, and yet none have the law put into their minds, nor written in their hearts; which involves a direct contradiction. And this covenant is promised now to be made, not in opposition to what grace and mercy was derived from it both before and under the law, nor as to the first administration of grace from the Mediator of it; but in opposition to the *covenant of Sinai*, and with respect to its outward solemn confirmation.

§7. "I will put my laws in their minds and write them in their hearts." In general, the reparation of our nature, by the restoration of the image of God in us, is promised in these words: the *mind* and *heart* are in scripture the seat of natural corruption, the residence of the principle of alienation from the life of God. Wherefore the *renovation* of our natures consists in the rectifying and curing of them, in the furnishing of them with contrary principles of faith, love and adherence to God. The "*mind*" is (עַלְפָּא, *diavola*) the *inward part*; the only safe and useful repository of the *laws of God*. When they are *there* laid up, we shall not lose them, neither men nor devils can take them from us. The excellency of covenant obedience doth not consist in the conformity of *outward actions* to the

law, (though *that* be required also) but principally in the *inward parts*, where God *searcheth* for, and *regardeth truth* in sincerity, Psal. li, 6; wherefore it is the cause of the *mind and understanding*, whose natural depravation is the spring and principle of all disobedience, is here promised in the first place. In the outward administration of the means of grace, the *affections*, or, if I may so speak, the more *outward part* of the soul, are usually first affected and wrought upon. But the first real effect of the internal promised grace of the covenant is on the *mind*, the most spiritual and inward part of the soul. And this in the New Testament is expressed by the “renovation of the *mind*,” Rom. xii; 1 Col. iii, 5; and the “opening of the eyes of our understandings,” Ephes. i, 17, 18. God “shining into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ,” 2 Cor. iv, 6; hereby the enmity against God; the vanity, darkness, and alienation from the life of God, with which the mind is naturally possessed and filled, are taken away. For “the law of God in the mind,” is the saving knowledge of the mind and will of God, revealed in the law, communicated to it, and implanted in it.

§8. The way whereby God in the covenant of grace thus works on the mind, is expressed by (*δίδως*) *giving*, so the apostle renders the Hebrew (*נתתי*) and *I will give*; and the Greek word may, by an enallage, be put for the future (*δωσω*) *I will give*. So it is expressed in the next clause in the future tense (*επιγρψω*) *I will write*. The word in the prophet is, *I will give*; we render it, *I will put*. But there are two things intimated in the word:—the *freedom* of the grace promised; it is a mere grant, or donation of grace; and—the *efficacy* of it; this is what emphatically, (*δίδως*, i. e. *εμψ*) *I am doing* in this covenant; namely. *freely giving that*

grace whereby my laws shall be implanted on the minds of men. (Τα; νομο; μν,) *my laws*, in the plural number; the *whole revelation* of the mind and will of God. By whatever way, or revelation, God makes known himself and his will to us, requiring our obedience, it is all comprised in that expression—“*his laws*.”

From these things we may easily discern the *nature of that grace* which is contained in this part of the first promise of the covenant. And this is the *effectual operation* of his Spirit in the renovation and saving illumination of our minds, whereby they are habitually made conformable to the *law of God*, that is, “the rule of our obedience in the new covenant,” and enabled for all acts and duties that are required of us.

§9. The second part of this first promise of the covenant is expressed in these words, “and will write them upon their hearts;” which renders the former part actually effectual.

Expositors generally and properly observe, that here is an allusion to the giving of the law on mount Sinai, in the *first* covenant. For then the law, (that is, the *ten words*) was written in tables of stone; not so much to secure the outward letter of them, as to represent the hardness of the people’s hearts to whom they were given. This event God promiseth to prevent under the new covenant by writing these laws now in *our hearts*, which he wrote before only in *tables of stone*; that is, he will effectually work that obedience in us which the law requires, for “he worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” The “*heart*,” as distinguished from the mind, compriseth the *will and affections*.

§10. The last thing in the words is, the *relation* that ensues between God, and his people; “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” This is

indeed a distinct promise by itself, summarily comprising all the blessings and privileges of the new covenant; and it is placed in the centre of the account, as from whence all the grace of it springs, wherein all the blessings of it consist, and by which they are secured. However, it is in this place peculiarly mentioned, as that which hath its foundation in the foregoing promises.

This is the general expression of any covenant relation between God and men;—"He will be to them a God, and they shall be a people to him." And it is frequently made use of with respect to the *first* covenant, which yet was disannulled. God owned his people for his peculiar portion, and they vouched him to be their God alone. It is a peculiar expression of an especial covenant relation; and the nature of it is to be expounded by the nature and properties of the covenant which it respects.

§11. This new covenant was *primarily* made with Jesus Christ the *surety* of it. For,

1. God neither would, nor (*salva justitia, sapientia et honore*) could treat immediately with sinful rebellious men on terms of grace for the future, until *satisfaction* was undertaken to be made for sins past, and such as should afterwards take place. This was done by Christ alone; see 2 Cor. v, 19, 20; Gal. iii, 13, 14; Rom. iii, 25.

2. No *restipulation of obedience* to God could be made by man, that might be a ground of entering into a covenant intended to be firm and stable. For whereas we had broken our first covenant engagement with God in our best condition, we were not likely of ourselves to make good a *new engagement* of an higher nature than the former.

3. That grace which was to be the spring of all the blessings of this covenant to the glory of God, and salvation of the church, was to be deposited in some *safe hand*, for the accomplishment of these ends.

4. As he was the *Mediator* of this covenant, God became *his God*, and he became the *servant of God*, in a peculiar manner. For he stood before God in this covenant as a *public representative* of all the elect.

5. God being in this covenant a *God and father*, to Christ, *he became*, by virtue thereof, *our God and Father*, John xx, 17; Heb. ii, 12, 13; and we became heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; his people to yield him all sincere obedience.

§12. The nature of this covenant relation is expressed on the one side and the other; "*I will be to them a God*," or, as it is elsewhere expressed, *I will be their God*. Let us inquire a little into this unspeakable privilege, which eternity alone will sufficiently unfold. (Και εσομαι) *And I will be, I who am that I am*; JEHOVAH, goodness and being itself, and the cause of all being and goodness to others; infinitely wise, powerful, righteous, &c. There lies the eternal spring of the infinite treasures and supplies of the church, here and for ever. "He will be a GOD to us." Now although this compriseth absolutely every thing that is good, yet may the notion of being "*a God*" to any, be referred to these two heads:—an all-sufficient *preserver*; and—an all-sufficient *rewarder*. It is included in this part of the promise, that they who take him to be their God, shall say, "thou art my God," Hos. ii, 23; and shall conduct themselves accordingly.

The other part of the promise is, "*And they shall be to me a people*;" or, *they shall be my people*; which contains God's *owning* them to be *his* in a peculiar manner (λαος εις περιποιησιν, 1 Pet. ii, 9;) "a peculiar peo-

ple." Let others take heed how they meddle with them, lest they intrench on God's property, Jer. ii, 3. And on the other hand is implied their *profession* of all *subjection* and obedience to him, and all dependence upon him. Their *avouching* this God to be *their* God.

§13. "And, they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

The second general promise declaring the nature of the new covenant, is here expressed. (Οὐ μὴ διδάξουσιν) *They shall by no means teach*, that is, as to a certain way and manner of it; for the negative is not universal as to *teaching*, but restrained to a *certain kind* of it, which was in use, and in a degree necessary, under the old covenant. (Γινώσκει τον Κυριον) *know the Lord*; intending the whole knowledge of God, and of his will as prescribed in the law; whatever he revealed for their good, Deut. xxix, 29. The manner of teaching, the continuation of which is *denied*, is *every man his brother*, and *every man his neighbor*. The *positive* part of the promise is,—"*They shall all know me.*" The principal *efficient cause* of our learning the knowledge of God under the new covenant, is *included* in this part of the promise; expressed in another prophet, "they shall be all taught of God." "*All of them, from the least to the greatest;*" a proverbial speech, signifying the generality intended without exception, Jer. viii, 1; "every one from the least to the greatest, is given to covetousness."

§14. From the vehement denial of the use of that *sort of teaching* which was in use under the Old Testament, some have contended that *all outward stated ways* of instruction under the New Testament are forbidden. Hence they have rejected all the ordinances, ministry, and government of the church;

which is, in fact, to maintain that there is no such thing as a professing church in the world. But yet (such is the inconsistency of error) those who are thus minded, endeavor in what they do to *teach others* their opinion, "every one his neighbor." The truth is, if all *outward teaching* be absolutely and universally forbidden, it would not only soon fill the world with darkness and brutish ignorance, but it would also follow, that if any one should come to the knowledge of this or any other text of scripture, it would be absolutely unlawful for him to communicate it to others!

Notwithstanding, some learned men have been so moved with this objection, as to affirm, that the accomplishment of this promise belongs to the *state of glory*; for therein alone, say they, we shall have no more need of teaching in any kind. But, as this exposition is directly contrary to the *design* of the apostle, which respects the *teaching of the new covenant* in opposition to the old; so there is no such difficulty in the words as to force us to "carry the interpretation of them into *another world*!"

§15. The teaching intended, the continuance of which is here denied, is that which was then in use in the church; or, rather, was to be so when the new covenant state was solemnly to be introduced. And this was twofold:—That which was *instituted* by the Lord himself; and that which the people had *super-added* in practice. Now it is plain that no promise of the gospel evacuates any *precept of the law of nature*; such as that of seeking the good of others by suitable means. But as to the *ceremonial law*, which the Jews principally relied upon, it is by the new covenant quite taken away.

As to the *practice* of the Jewish church in these institutions, it is not to be expressed what extremes they ran into. We may reasonably suppose, it was of the

same kind with what flourished afterwards in their famous *schools* derived from these first inventors. The first record we have of the *manner of their teaching*, is in the *Mishna*: this is their interpretation of the law, or their sayings one to another, "Know the Lord." And he that shall seriously consider but one *section or chapter* in that whole book, will quickly discern of what kind and nature their *teaching* was; for of such an *operous, curious, fruitless work*, there is not another instance to be given in the whole world. These were the *burdens* which the *pharisees* bound and laid upon the shoulders of their disciples, until they were utterly weary and faint under them. And this kind of teaching had possessed the whole church when the new covenant was solemnly to be introduced; no other being in use. This is *absolutely intended* in this promise, as what was utterly to cease. For God would take away the law, which in itself was a *burden*, as the apostles speak, "which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear." And the weight of that burden was unspeakably increased by the expositions and additions whereof this *teaching* consisted; wherefore, the removal of it is here proposed by way of *promise*, evidently proving it to be a matter of *grace* and kindness to the church. But the removal of *teaching in general* is always mentioned as a *threatening* and punishment.

§16. But yet, it may be, more clear light into the mind of the Holy Spirit may be attained, from a due consideration of what it is that is so to be taught? And this is "*know the Lord*." Concerning which may be observed, that there was a *knowledge of God* under the Old Testament, so revealed as that it was hidden under *types*, wrapt up in *veils*, expressed only in *parables* and *dark sayings*. Now this kind of teaching

by mutual encouragement to look into the *veiled things* of the mystery of God in Christ, is now to cease at the solemn introduction of the new covenant, as being rendered useless by the full, *clear manifestation* of them in the gospel. They shall no more teach, that is, they shall *need no more so to teach* this knowledge of God; for it shall be made plain to the understandings of all believers. And this is what I judge to be principally intended by the Holy Ghost in this part of the promise, as that to which the positive part of it doth so directly answer.

We have, I hope, sufficiently freed the words from the difficulties that seem to attend them, so as that we shall not need to refer the accomplishment of this promise to *heaven* with many ancient and modern expositors; nor yet with others, to restrain it to the first converts to Christianity, who were miraculously illuminated; much less so to interpret them, so to exclude a stated ministry in the church.

§17. The positive is part; "for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Those to whom it is made, are (*πάντες αὐτῶν*) *all of them*: but the terms of the distribution he rendereth in the singular number, which increaseth the emphasis, (*απο μικρῆς αὐτῶν εἰς μεγαλῆς αὐτῶν*) "from the least to the greatest." If only the external administration of the grace of the covenant be intended, none are excluded from the *tender* of the knowledge of God. But whereas it is the internal, effectual grace of the covenant, not only the *means*, but the *infallible event*; not only that they shall be all *taught* to know, but they shall all *actually know* the Lord, and all the individuals are intended. It is not implied that they shall all do so *equally*, or have the same *degree* of spiritual wisdom and understanding. "*They shall all know me.*" No duty is more fre-

quently commanded than this is, nor any grace more frequently promised. In brief, it is the knowledge of him as revealed in Jesus Christ under the New Testament; to know God as he is in Christ *personally*, as he will be to us in Christ *graciously*, and what he requires of us, and accepts through the Beloved: but notwithstanding the clear revelation of these things; we abide in ourselves unable to discern and receive them; therefore such a spiritual knowledge is intended, as by which the mind is *renewed*, being accompanied with faith and love in the heart.

§18. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This is the great fundamental promise and grace of the new covenant; for though it be last expressed, yet, in order of nature, it precedeth the other mercies and privileges mentioned, and is the foundation of their communication to us. Not only an addition of new grace and mercy is expressed in these words, but a reason is rendered *why* he would bestow them. The first thing, in order of nature, is the *free pardon of sin*; which is the *only reason* mentioned, why God will give to them the other blessings mentioned.

Sin is here expressed by three terms (*αδικια, αμαρτια, ανομια*) *unrighteousness, sin, and iniquities*, as we render the words. Nor are these terms needlessly multiplied; many of these whom God graciously takes into covenant, are antecedently obnoxious to all sorts of sins: in the grace of the covenant there is mercy provided for the pardon of them *all*. Therefore none should be discouraged from resting on the faithfulness of God in this covenant, who are invited to a compliance.

But there is more intended in the words; they distinctly express all those respects of sin in general, by which the *conscience of a sinner* is affected, burdened, and terrified. (*Αδυνα*) *unrighteousness*, expresseth a general affection of sin with respect to God. It is a thing *unequal* and *unrighteous*, that man should sin against God his sovereign ruler and benefactor. The original perfection of his nature consisted in this righteousness towards God by rendering to him due obedience. This is overthrown by sin, which is therefore both shameful and ruinous, and which, when the conscience is awakened by conviction, distresseth it. (*Αμαρτια*) *sin*, is properly an *erring from that end and scope* which it is our duty to aim at. There is a certain *end* for which we were made, and a certain *rule* proper for attaining it. And this end being our only blessedness, it is our interest to be always in a tendency towards it. This is the *glory of God*, and our *eternal salvation* in the enjoyment of him. To this the law of God is a perfect guide. "*To sin*," therefore, is to *forsake that rule*, and thereby to forego our aim at that end. It is to place self and the world as our end, in the place of God and his glory, and to take the imaginations of our hearts for our rule. Wherefore the perverse folly of "wandering away from the chief good as our end, and the best guide as our rule," embracing the greatest evils in their stead is (*αμαρτια*) *sin*, rendering the punishment righteous, and filling the sinner with shame and fear. (*Ανομια*) *iniquity*; "a voluntary unconformity to the law." Herein the formal nature of sin consists, 1 John iii, 4; and this is that which, in the first place, passeth on the conscience of a sinner. Wherefore, as *all sorts* of particular sins are included in these terms; so the *general nature* of sin,

in all its causes and respects, terrifying the sinner, and manifesting the righteous curse of the law, are declared by them.

§19. That which is promised with respect to these sins, is:

1. (Ελεως εδομαι) "*I will be merciful;*" *propitious, gracious* through a propitiation, under the New Testament, Rom. iii, 25; 1 John ii, 2. And in Christ alone God is *merciful* to our sins.

2. (Ου μη μνησθωλει) "*I will remember no more.*" The law with its awful sanction, was the means divinely appointed to bring sin to a judicial remembrance and trial. Wherefore, the dissolution of the law's obliging power to punish, which is an act of God, as the Supreme Rector and judge of all; belongeth to the *pardon of sin*. We may farther notice, that the assertion is fortified by a double negative; sin shall never be called legally to a remembrance.

§20. (II.) The observations from the whole are the following: 1. The covenant of grace, as reduced into the form of a testament, confirmed by the blood of Christ, doth not depend on any *condition* or qualification in our persons, but in a *free grant* and donation of God, and so are all the good things prepared in it.

2. The precepts of the old covenant are turned into promises under the new. Their *preceptive power* is not taken away, but grace is promised for the performance of them.

3. All things in the new covenant being proposed to us by way of *promise*, it is by *faith alone* we may attain a participation of them, Heb. iii, 1.

4. A sense of the loss of an interest in the benefits of the old covenant, is the best preparation for receiving the new.

§21. To these we may add the following:

1. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in the new covenant, in its being and *repairing efficacy*, is large and extensive as sin in its *power to deprave* our natures.

2. The work of grace in the new covenant passeth on the whole soul in all its faculties, powers, and affections, for their change and renovation. The whole was corrupted, and the whole must be renewed.

3. To take away the necessity and efficacy of *renewing* sanctifying grace, consisting in an internal efficacious operation of the principles, habits, and acts of internal grace and obedience, is plainly to overthrow and *reject* the new covenant.

4. We bring nothing to the new covenant but our hearts as tables to be *written on*, with the sense of the insufficiency of the precepts and promises of the law with respect to our own ability to comply with them.

5. The Lord Christ, God and man, undertaking to be the mediator between God and man, and a surety on our behalf, is the head of the new covenant, which is made and established with us in him.

§22. And we may observe farther:

1. As nothing *less* than God becoming our God could help and save us, so nothing *more* can be required.

2. The efficacy, security, and glory of this covenant depend *originally* on the nature of God, *immediately* and actually upon the mediation of Christ.

3. It is from the engagement of the divine properties that this covenant is ordered in all things and sure. Infinite wisdom hath provided it, and infinite power will make it effectual.

4. As the *grace* of this covenant is inexpressible, so are the *obligations* it puts upon us to obedience.

5. God doth as well undertake for our being his people, as he doth for his being our God.

6. Those whom God makes a covenant with, are his in a peculiar manner.

§23. On that part of the subject which relates to *teaching*, we may observe:

1. The instructive ministry of the Old Testament as such, and with respect to the carnal rites thereof, was a ministry of the *letter*, and not of the *spirit*, which did not really effect in the hearts of men the things which it taught. The spiritual benefit which was obtained under it, proceeded from the *promise*, and not from the efficacy of the law, or the covenant made at Sinai.

2. There is a duty incumbent on every man to instruct others according to his ability and opportunity in the knowledge of God; the law of it, being natural and eternal, is always obligatory on all sorts of persons. How few are there that take any care to instruct their own children and servants! and yet to carry this duty farther would be looked upon almost as madness in the days wherein we live. We have far more who teach one another sin, folly, yea villany of all sorts, than the knowledge of God, and the duty we owe him.

3. It is the spirit of grace alone, as promised in the new covenant, frees the church from a laborious, but ineffectual, way of teaching. He who, in all his teaching, doth not take his encouragement from the internal, effectual teaching of God under the covenant of grace, and bends not all his endeavors to be subservient to that end, hath but an old Testament ministry.

4. There was an hidden treasure of divine wisdom, of "the knowledge of God," laid up in the revelations

and institutions of the Old Testament, which the people were not able to comprehend. They said one to another, "Know the Lord;" yet their attainments were but small, in comparison of what is contained in the ensuing promise.

5. The whole knowledge of God in Christ is both plainly revealed, and savingly communicated to believers, by virtue of the new covenant.

§24. Respecting the *knowledge of God* spoken of, observe:

1. There are, and ever have been, different *degrees* of the saving knowledge of God in the church, 1 John ii, 13, 14. Let every one be content with what he receives, and improve it to the utmost.

2. Where there is not some degree of saving knowledge, no interest in the new covenant can be pretended.

3. The full and clear declaration of God, as he is to be known of us in this world, is a privilege reserved for the days of the New Testament.

4. To *know God*, as revealed in Christ, is the highest privilege of which in this life we can be made partakers. For this is life eternal, that we may know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; John xvii, 3.

§25. Concerning what is said of sin and its pardon, observe:

1. Free, sovereign, undeserved grace in the pardon of sin, is the original spring of all covenant blessings. Hereby all boasting in ourselves is excluded, which God eminently aimed at in its contrivance and establishment, Rom. iii, 27; 1 Cor. i, 29—31. *Pardon of sin* is not merited by antecedent duties, but is the strongest obligation to future ones.

2. The new covenant (as to its internal form,) is made with them alone, who effectually and eventually are made partakers of the grace of it; though the proposals of its terms are indefinite.

3. The aggravations of sin are great and many, which the consciences of convinced sinners ought to have a regard to.

4. There is in the new covenant a provision of grace and mercy for all *sorts*, and all *aggravations* of sins.

5. Aggravations of sin do glorify pardoning grace. Therefore doth God here so express them, that he may declare the glory of his grace in their remission.

6. We cannot understand aright the glory and excellency of pardoning mercy, unless we are convinced of the greatness and vileness of our sins in all their aggravations.

VERSE 13.

In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.

§1. Connexion and scope of the text. §2. The force of the argument. §3. How the former covenant was made old. §4. Abrogated by God himself. §5. Its vanishing away. §6. Why its being disannulled is so expressed.

§1. **T**HE apostle having in the foregoing verses proved, in general, the *insufficiency* of the *old covenant*, the *necessity* of the *new*, the *difference* between them, with the *preference* of the latter above the former; in all confirming the excellency of the priesthood of Christ above that of Aaron; in this verse he draweth a special inference from one word in the prophetic testimony, wherein the main truth to be confirmed was asserted. Here he fixeth on a *new argument*, in par-

ticular, to prove the necessity and certainty of its *abolition*; and hereby, according to his wonted manner, he makes a *transition* to his following discourses, wherein he proves the same truth from the distinct consideration of the use and ends of the institutions, ordinances, and sacrifices, belonging to that covenant. This he pursues to the 24th verse of the tenth chapter.

§2. (Εν το λεγειν καινην) *in that, or whereas, it is said a new*; or calleth it, "*a new*." So expressly in the prophet; "Behold, I will make a *new covenant*." What he infers from hence is, that (τεταλαιωκε την πρωτην) *he hath made the first old*. The force of the argument lies in this, that he would not have called the *second new*, had he not made the *first old*; for (τεταλαιωκε) *he made old*, is of an *active* signification, and denotes an *authoritative act* of God upon the old covenant, whereof the calling the other *new* was a *sign* and evidence; but yet, it was the designation of the new covenant that was the foundation of making the other old.

§3. The word having respect to the *time past*, it refers to the prediction and promise of the new covenant; for the *introduction* of the new covenant did *actually abolish* the old, making it to disappear, whereas the act of God here intended is only his *making it old* in order to that end, which was done by various degrees.

1. By *calling the faith* of the church, from resting in it, to the expectation of a *better* in the room of it. This brought it under a decay in their minds, and gave it an inferior valuation to what it had before. They were now assured, that something much better would in due time be introduced.

2. By a *plain declaration* (by Jeremiah and others) of its infirmity, and its insufficiency for the great ends of a perfect covenant between God and the church.

3. From the giving of this promise, God variously, by his providence, weakened its administration, which by its *decaying age* was more and more manifested; for, immediately after the giving this promise, the Babylonish captivity gave a total intercision and interruption to the whole administration of it for *seventy years*; which might be fairly deemed an evident token of its approaching period, and that God would have the church to live without it. And even after their return, neither the *temple*, nor its *worship*, the administrations of the covenant, nor the priesthood, were ever restored to their pristine beauty and glory. And whereas the people in general were much distressed at the apprehension of its decay, God comforts them—not with any intimation that things under *that* covenant should ever be brought into a better condition, but—with an expectation of *his* coming amongst them, who would put an *utter end* to all the administrations of it, Hag. ii, 6—9. And from that time forwards it were easy to trace the whole process of it, and to manifest how it continually declined towards the end.

§4. Thus did God *make it old*, by variously disposing of it to its end; and, to give a still fuller evidence, called the covenant which he would make *a new one*. But no institution of God will ever wax old *of itself*; nor can the sins of men abate their force. He only who sets them up can take them down.

And this is the apostle's first argument from the testimony, to prove that the first covenant was to be abolished. But whereas it may be questioned, whether it directly follow, that it must *be taken away* because it is *made old*; he confirms the truth of his inference from a *general maxim*, which hath also the nature of a new argument: “now, saith he, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” *Old is*

significative of that which is to have *an end*, and which actually draws towards it. Every thing that *can wax old* hath an end; and that which doth so, draws towards that end. So the psalmist affirming, that the heavens themselves shall *perish*, adds as a proof, "they shall *wax old* as a garment;" and then none can doubt but they must have an *end*, at least as to their present use.

§5. (Το δε) *but that*, or *whatever it be* (παλαισμενον και γηρασκον) *which decayeth and waxeth old*; we express the first by *that which decayeth*, to avoid the repetition of the same word, we having no other whereby to express waxing old, or made old: but properly it is that which hath the *effect passive* of (πεταλαιωκε) *hath made old*; it is that which *is made old*; and it properly respecteth *things*, not *persons*. But the other word (γηρασκον) respects *persons*, not things. Wherefore the apostle might have used a *pleonasm* to give *emphasis* to his assertion; yet nothing hinders but we may think that he had a distinct respect to the *things* and *persons* belonging to its administration.

(Εγγυς αφανισμος) "ready to vanish away," *near to a disappearance*, an abolition, and taking out of the way. The proposition is universal; whatever brings to *decay* and *age*, will bring them to an end; for decay and age are the ex-pressions of a *tendency* to an end. Let an angel live ever so long, he *waxeth not old*, because he cannot die. *Waxing old* is absolutely opposed to an eternal duration, Psal. cii, 26, 27.

§6. It being the removal of the old covenant and all its administrations that it respected, it may be inquired, why the apostle expresseth it by (αφανισμος) *a disappearance*, or vanishing out of sight. And it may refer—to the glorious outward appearance of its administrations. This was what greatly captivated the minds

and affections of those Hebrews; "the ministration of the letter was glorious." Besides; it departed as an object will by its *gradual* removal out of our sight: we by little and little lose the prospect of it until it utterly disappear. All the glorious institutions of the law were at best as *stars* in the firmament of the church, and therefore were all to *disappear* at the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 1.

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

§1. The apostle's general design; the general parts of this chapter. §2. Some things promised. §3, 4. The terms particularly explained. §5. Ordinances of worship §6. The sanctuary or tabernacle. §7. Why called, worldly. §8. Observations.

§1. **T**HE general design of the apostle in these discourses is to prove, that the old covenant made with the church at Sinai, with all its ordinances of worship and privileges, ceased to be of any force in the church. Hereon depended a total alteration of the ecclesiastical state of the Hebrews; wherefore, that they might with the more readiness embrace the truth, he not only declares that, *de facto*, the old covenant had ceased, but evinceth by various reasons that it was *necessary* it should, and that unspeakable advantages thence accrued to the church.

In pursuit of this design he unfolds to them the great mysteries of divine wisdom and counsel that ever were revealed to the church before he spake to us by the Son. For,

1. On this occasion he takes off the *veil from the face of Moses*, declaring the nature and end of the old covenant, together with the signification, efficacy, and use of all its institutions and ordinances of worship.

2. He takes occasion from hence to declare the great mystery of *redemption* by Christ; the office he bore, and the work he performed. Wherefore we have in this epistle both a clear exposition of the *first promise*, with all those which were given to explain and confirm it, and also of the *law* and its worship which were afterwards introduced; that is, in general of the *whole Old Testament*.

This chapter hath two general parts:

First, A declaration of the *fabric of the tabernacle*, its *furniture*, and the *services* performed in it, ver. 1—11.

Secondly, a declaration of the *nature of the tabernacle and sacrifice* of the Lord Christ, with the end and efficacy thereof, ver. 11—28.

§2. "Then verily the *first covenant*," &c. Some things must be premised with respect to the reading of these words. (Η πρώτη) *the first*, answers in *gender* to the priesthood, the tabernacle, and the covenant; but I shall adhere to the supplement made by our translators, "*the first covenant*." (Δικαιωματα λατρειας) "*ordinances of divine service*." Some read these words by an *asyndeton*, and not in *construction*, from the ambiguity of the case and number of the last word (λατρειας) which may be either of the *genitive* singular, or *accusative* plural, "*ordinances, services*;" but whereas it is evident, that the apostle intends no (λατρεία) *service* here but what was performed (εν δικαιωμασιν) *by virtue of ordinances*, or institutions; the word ought to be read in *construction*, "*ordinances of worship*." The *Syriac* has it, "*commands of ministry*," or *pre-*

cepts, which gives us the plain sense and meaning of the apostle; for all agree, that he intends the ordinances of Levitical worship.

§3. Proceeding to the comparison designed between the old covenant and the new, as to the *services* and *sacrifices* wherewith the one and the other was established and confirmed, he introduceth the first part of the comparison by way of *concession*, (*μεν εἰ καὶ*) *and then verily*; (*καὶ*) *and is emphatical*, and increaseth the signification of the other particles, as it is often used. (*Οὖν*) *then*; most render it by (*igitur*) *therefore*; but the connexion with the foregoing discourse is rather *real* than *verbal*. It is not an *inference* made from what was before declared, but a *continuation* of the same design; “and yet moreover it is granted;” or, therefore it is granted, verily so it was; and so (*μεν*) *indeed*, serves to the *protasis* of the comparison, to which (*δε*) *but*, answereth ver. 11. “But Christ being come.”

The subject spoken of is (*ἡ πρώτη*) *the first*, that is, (*διαθήκη*) the *first covenant* whereof we treat; that made with the fathers at Sinai, and to which the Hebrews as yet adhered. Of this covenant it is affirmed, in general, that it had *ordinances of worship*,—and a *worldly sanctuary*;—and their *relation* to it is, that it *had them*.

§4. (*Εἶχε*) “it *had them*,” that is, when that covenant was first made. Then it had these things annexed to it, which were its privileges and glory. For the apostle hath, in the whole discourse, continual respect to the *first making* of the covenant, and the first institutions of its administrations. They *belonged to it* as those wherein its administration consisted.

§5. (*Διακείμενα ἔργα*) *ordinances, rites, institutions, statutes*. What there is of *just* and right in the signi-

fication of the word, respects the *right of God* in the constitution and imposition of these ordinances. They were appointments of God which he had a *right* to prescribe, whence their observances of the part of the church was *just and equal*. (*Ἀδελφείας*) *of service*; it is originally of a large import, and denotes any service whatever; but here, and constantly in the New Testament, as also the verb (*λατρεῖν*) *to serve*, it is restrained to *divine service*, Joh. xvi, 2; Rom. ix, 4; chap. xii, 1; and it were better rendered (*cultus*) "*of worship*," than "*of divine service*."

And this was that part of *divine worship* about which God had so many controversies with the people of Israel under the Old Testament. The law of this worship was an *hedge* that God had set about them, to keep them from superstition and idolatry. And if at any time they brake over it, or neglected it, and let it fall, they failed not to rush into the most abominable *idolatry*. On the other hand, oftentimes they placed all their trust and confidence for their acceptance with God, and blessing from him, on the external observance of its institutions. And hereby they countenanced themselves not only in a neglect of moral duties and spiritual obedience, but in a course, of flagitious sins and various wickednesses. To repress these exorbitances, with respect to both extremes, the ministry of the prophets was in an especial manner directed.

§6. It had (*το τε ἅγιον κοσμητικόν*) *also a worldly sanctuary*. His principal design is to confirm the pre-eminence of the *new covenant above the old*. To this end he compares them together in their first *introduction* and establishment, with what *belonged* to them. And as this in the *new covenant* was the mediation, priesthood, and sacrifice of Christ; so in the *old*, it was the

tabernacle with the services and sacrifices belonging to it.

This ancient tabernacle, with its furniture, was a *visible pledge* of the presence of God among the people, owning, blessing, and protecting them; Num. x, 35, 36; Ps. lxxviii, &c. a pledge of God's putting forth his *strength* and power in behalf of the people. And according to this institution it was a most effectual means to strengthen their faith, and to inspire *confidence* in God; for what more could they desire, to that end, than to enjoy such a *gracious earnest* of his powerful presence among them? But when they ceased to trust in God, and put their confidence in the things themselves, which were no otherwise useful but as they were *pledges* of his presence, they proved their ruin. Again, it was a *fixed seat* of all divine worship wherein the truth and purity of it was to be preserved. Here was the book of the law laid up, according to the prescript whereof the priests were obliged in all generations to take care of the public worship. Moreover, it was principally the privileges and glory of the church of Israel, in that this tabernacle was a *continual representation of the incarnation* of the Son of God; a type of his "coming in the flesh to dwell among us." Hence was that severe injunction, that "all things concerning it should be made according to the pattern shewed in the mount." For what could the wisdom of men do in the prefiguration of that *mystery*, of which they had no comprehension?

§7. But yet the *sanctuary* the apostle calls (*κοσμηριον*) *worldly*; because it was of *this world*. For the *place* of it was on the earth; in opposition to which the sanctuary of the new covenant is *in heaven*, chap. viii, 2. The *materials* of it, (although durable and costly in

their kind) were but worldly, fading and perishing things; God intimating thereby that they were not to have an everlasting continuance. Gold, and wood, and silk, and hair, however curiously wrought, and carefully preserved, are *but for a time*. Moreover, all its *services* and sacrifices, separated from their typical use, were worldly; and their efficacy extended only to *worldly* things.

On these accounts the apostle calls it "worldly;" yet not absolutely so, but in opposition to that which is "heavenly;" all things in the ministration of the new covenant are "*heavenly*;" so is the *priest*, his *sacrifice*, *tabernacle*, and *altar*; as we shall see in our progress.

§8. And we may observe from the whole:

1. There was never any covenant between God and man, but it had some "ordinances," or *arbitrary institutions* of divine worship, annexed to it; which contains both a demonstration of *his sovereignty*, and affords an especial trial of *our obedience* in things whereof we have no reason but his mere will and pleasure.

2. It is a hard and rare thing to have the minds of men kept upright with God in their observance of instituted divine worship. And the reason of this difficulty is because faith hath not that assistance and encouragement from innate principles of reason, and sensible experience of this kind of obedience, as it hath in that which is moral, internal, and spiritual.

3. Divine institution alone is that which renders any thing acceptable to God. Although the things that belonged to the sanctuary, and the sanctuary itself, were in themselves but "worldly;" yet being *divine ordinances*, they had a *glory* in them, and were in their season acceptable to God.

4. God can animate outward carnal things, with an hidden invisible spring of glory and efficacy; so he did

their *sanctuary* with its relation to *Christ*; which was an object of faith, that no eye of flesh could behold.

5. All divine service or worship must be resolved into divine ordination or institution. A worship not ordained of God is not accepted of God. "It had ordinances of worship."

6. A "worldly sanctuary" is enough for them whose service is "worldly;" and these things the men of the world are satisfied with.

VERSE 2.

For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the sanctuary.

§1. The subject proposed. §2. (I.) The several parts of the word explained. The tabernacle made §3. The candlestick. §4. The table and shew-bread. §5. The altar of incense. §6. (II.) Observations Every part of God's house is filled and adorned with pledges of his presence. Rules of interpreting these mysteries. §7. Signification of the candlestick. §8. The table and shew-bread. §9. Other Observations.

§1. **T**wo things were ascribed to the first covenant in the verse foregoing:

First, "Ordinances of worship;" and

Secondly, "A worldly sanctuary." In this verse the apostle enters upon a description of them both, beginning with the latter.

§2. (I.) The subject treated of is (σκηνη, that is, מקדש) *the tabernacle*; the common name for the whole fabric, as the *temple* was afterwards of the house built by Solomon. And an eminent type this was of the *incarnation* of *Christ*, whereby "the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily;" Col. ii, 9: *substantially* in the human nature, as it dwelt *typically* in this tab-

ernacle. "He was made flesh," &c. (ἐσθηνώσε ἐν ἡμῖν, John i, 1,) "*pitched his tabernacle with us.*"

Forty days was Moses in the mount with God, whilst he instructed him in all things that belonged to it; so great and glorious was the design of divine Wisdom in this tabernacle; for it was the house wherein his glory was to dwell; and not only so, but a type and representation of the depth of his counsel in the incarnation of his Son, whereby the divine nature would personally dwell in the human, and that for ever.

§3. "There was in it (ἡ λυχνία) *the candlestick.*" The making of this candlestick is particularly described, Exod. xxv, 31, &c. it was placed on the *south* side of the tabernacle near *the veil* that covered the most holy place, and over against it on the *north* side was the *table*, with the *shew-bread*; and in the *midst*, at the very entrance of the most holy place, was the *altar of incense*; see Exod. xl, 20, 27. And this "*candlestick*" was made wholly of beaten gold, of one piece, with the lamps and appurtenances without either joints or screws, which is not without its mystery; to fit it for its service, pure *oil-olive* was to be provided, as an offering from the people, Exod. xxvii, 20. And it was the office of the high priest "*to order it,*" that is, to *dress* its lamps, every evening and every morning, supplying them with fresh oil, and removing whatever might be offensive, Exod. xxvii, 21. And this is called "*a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel;*" which manifests the great concernment of the church in this holy utensil.

§4. On the other side of the sanctuary, over against the candlestick, was the *table*, and the *shew-bread*, (which the apostle reckons as the second part of the furniture of this first part of the tabernacle) distin-

guishing them from each other; "the *table*, and the *shew-bread*." The making of this table with its measures and use, its form and fashion, are recorded Exod. xxv, 23—29; chap. xxxvii, 10, &c.

Upon this (לחם יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה) *table* was (ἡ προθεσὶς τῶν ἄρτων) the *shew-bread*; the *proposition of the bread*, or *loaves*, by an hypallage for (ἄρτοι τῆς προθεσεως) the *bread of proposition*; as Matt. xii, 4: the bread that was *proposed*, or *set forth*. In the Hebrew it is (לחם) *bread*, in the singular number; which the apostle renders by (ἄρτοι) *loaves*, in the plural, as also doth the evangelist; for that bread consisted of *many loaves*, and the Greek word (ἄρτος) properly signifies a *loaf*; vide Sept. Exod. xxv, 30.

The *number* of these *loaves*, or *cakes* as we call them, was twelve; and they were set on the table in *two rows*, six in a row, being laid one upon the other; the table itself was two cubits long, and one cubit broad; and whereas it had a border of an hand's breadth round about, nothing could lie on the table but what was placed within that border. Wherefore it is certain that they were of such a shape and proportion, as might fitly be placed on the table within the border; and more concerning them we know not.

These cakes were renewed *every sabbath* in the morning, the renovation of them being part of the peculiar worship of the day. The manner of it, as also of the making of them, is described Lev. xxiv, 5, 9; and because the new bread was to be brought in and immediately placed in the room of that which was taken away, it is called absolutely (לחם תמיד) the *continual bread*; Numb. iv, 7. For God says it was to be before him (תמיד) *jugiter*; Exod. xxv, 30;) *always*, or *continually*. This is all that the apostle observes to have been in the *first part* of the tabernacle.

§5. There was in it moreover the *altar of incense*. But this was not placed in the midst of it at any equal distances from the *sides*, but just at the *west end*, where the veil opened into the most holy place; wherefore by our apostle it is reckoned to that part of the sanctuary, as we shall see on the next verse.

Concerning this part of the tabernacle, the apostle affirms that "*it was called (αγία) holy*." Exod. xxvi, 33; "The veil shall divide between the *holy*, (that is, *this part* of the sanctuary) and the *most holy*;" which our apostle describes in the next place.

§6. (II.) *Obs.* Every part of God's house, the place wherein he will dwell, is filled and adorned with pledges of his presence, and means of communicating his grace; such were the furniture of this part of the tabernacle. And so doth God dwell in his church, which in a sense is his tabernacle with men.

But the principal inquiry about these things is concerning their *mystical signification* and use. For by the apostle they are only proposed in general, under this notion, that they were *all typical representations* of things spiritual and evangelical; without this he had no concernment in them.

We may in this matter be supplied by expositors with a variety of conjectures; but none of them, so far as I have observed, have at all endeavored to fix any *certain rule* for the trial and measure of such conjectures, and to *guide* us in the interpretation of this mystery; without which we shall wander in perpetual uncertainty. There are two things so manifest in the context that they may be safely relied on as a rule and guide:

(1.) That the tabernacle, and all contained in it, were *typical of Christ*. This is directly affirmed, chap

viii, 2; and it is the apostle's design farther to declare and confirm it in what remains of this chapter.

(2.) That the Lord Christ in this representation of him by the tabernacle, its *utensils* and services, is not considered absolutely, but as the church is in mystical union with him: they were all representative of Christ in the *discharge of his office*. This is excellently observed by Cyril:

“Although Christ be but one, yet he is understood by us in a manifold manner. He is the *tabernacle* on account of the covering of his flesh; he is the *table*, because he is our food and life; he is the *ark*, having the hidden law of God, because he is the word of the Father; he is the *candlestick*, because he is spiritual light; he is the *altar of incense*, because he is a sweet savor for sanctification; he is the *altar of burnt-offering*, because he was offered upon the cross as a sacrifice for the life of the whole world.” He gives other instances to the same purpose, In Johan. lib. iv, cap. 28.

§7. The *candlestick* with its seven branches and its perpetual light with pure oil, giving light to all holy administrations, represented the fulness of spiritual light in Christ Jesus, and which by him is communicated to the whole church. “In him was life, and the life was the *“light of men,”* John i, 4. The Holy Spirit rested on him in all the variety of his gifts and operations, especially those of spiritual *light*, wisdom, and understanding, Isa. xi, 2, 3; Rev. i, 4. The Lord Christ gives out the fulness and perfection of spiritual light and gifts to illuminate the church; even as the light of the tabernacle depended on the seven lamps of the candlestick. Wherefore by the communication of the Spirit's fulness in all his gifts and graces, to Christ, he became the fountain of all spiritual light to

the church. For he *subjectively* enlightens their minds by his Spirit; Ephes. i, 16—19; and *objectively*, and doctrinally, conveys the means of light to them by his word.

This is of faith in the matter, viz. that which God instructeth the church in, by this holy utensil, and its use was, that the promised Messiah, whom all these things represented, was to be by the fulness of the Spirit in himself, and the communication of all spiritual graces and gifts to others, the only cause of all *true saving light* to the church. He is, "the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world," if savingly enlightened.

§8. The *table*, and the *shew-bread*, mentioned in the next place, respected him also under *another consideration*. The use of the *table*, which was all overlaid with *gold*, was only to bear the bread which was placed upon it. The matter of it being most precious, and the form of it most beautiful and glorious, it might as far represent the *divine person* of Christ as any thing *which is of this creation* could do, ver. 11. But that the Lord Christ is the only *bread of life* to the church, the only spiritual food of our souls, he himself fully testifies, John vi, 32—35. He therefore, he alone, was represented by this continual bread of the sanctuary.

§9. We may farther observe:

1. The communication of sacred light from Christ, in the gifts of the Spirit, is absolutely necessary to the due and acceptable performance of all holy offices and duties of worship in the church. And,

2. No man by his utmost endeavors in the use of outward means can obtain the least beam of saving light, unless it be communicated to him by Christ, who is the only fountain and cause of it.

VERSE 8, 4.

And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all, which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.

§1. The apostle's design, not to give a minute description. §2. The situation of the second part of the tabernacle. §3. Called the Holy of holies. §4. The golden censer, or rather the altar of incense. §5. The ark of the covenant. §6. The golden pot, Aaron's rod, and the two tables. §7. Observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle in these verses proceedeth to describe the *second part* of the tabernacle, with its holy furniture. His design is not to give us an exact description of these things, as he observes in the close of the fifth verse, but only to declare their use and signification. Wherefore, they deal injuriously both with him and the text, who rigidly examine every word, as if he had designed an exact account of the *frame, posture, fashion, and measure* of this part of the tabernacle, and *every thing contained* in it; a due consideration of this renders all anxious inquiry of the kind altogether needless. With respect to the *end* he aimed at, the words he useth are exactly true and proper.

§2. The first thing mentioned is the *situation* of this part of the tabernacle; it was "after the second veil;" that is, with respect to them who entered into the tabernacle; for they were to pass through the whole length of the first part, before they came to this; nor was there any other way of entering into it. The first veil was not a separating veil of the tabernacle as this was, but the hanging of the door of the tent. This the apostle here reckons as a "veil," because as by *this* the

priests were hindered from entering or even looking into the most holy place, so by *that* the people were forbidden to enter or look into the first part of the sanctuary, into which the priests entered daily.

3. "The tabernacle which is called," by God himself, (קֹדֶשׁ הַקֳּדָשִׁים *Exod. xxvi, 33, 34;*) "*the holy of holies;*" that is, *most holy*; the superlative degree being expressed by the repetition of the *substantive*, as is usual in the Hebrew. What is thus called was most eminently typical of Christ, who is called by this name, *Dan. ix, 24*. "To anoint the *most holy*." In short—the place in the tabernacle, which was most *sacred*, and most *secret*, which had the most eminent *symbols* of the divine presence, and the clearest representations of God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, is so called.

§4. The first *utensil* reckoned to this second part of the tabernacle is, (χρυσεν θυμιατηριον) *the golden censer*. He doth not say it was *in* it, but it "*had it*." The word (θυμιατηριον) which we translate a *censer*, may as well be rendered the *altar of incense*, as it is by the *Syriack* "*the house of spices*," the place for the spices of which the incense was compounded. The altar of incense was all overlaid with beaten gold, hence it is here said to be (χρυσεν) *of gold*. And whereas it was one of the most glorious vessels of the tabernacle, and most significant, if the apostle intended it not in *this word*, he takes no notice of it at all, which is very unlikely. There was a two-fold use of the altar of incense; the one of the ordinary priests, to burn incense in the sanctuary every day; and the other of the high priest, to take incense from it when he entered into the most holy place, to fill it with a cloud of its aromatic smoke. The apostle intending a comparison peculiarly between the Lord Christ and the *high priest only*, in this place;

and not the other priests in the daily discharge of their office, he takes no notice of the use of the altar of incense in the sanctuary, but only that which respected the most holy place, and the entrance of the high priest into it; and therefore he affirms this *place* to have *had the golden altar*, its principal use and end being designed for the service of it. This I judge to be the true meaning of the apostle, and proper sense of his words, and shall not therefore trouble myself nor the reader with the repetition or confutation of other conjectures. Although it was placed *without* the veil, that the high priest might not enter one step into the most holy place until the smoke of the incense went before him; yet had it a *peculiar respect* to the ark and mercy-seat, and he has therefore assigned it the same place and service with them.

The manner of the service of this altar was briefly thus: the high priest, on the solemn day of expiation, took a golden censer from this altar; and, going out of the sanctuary, he put into it fire taken from the altar of burnt offerings, which was without the tabernacle in the court where the perpetual fire was preserved; then returning into the holy place, he filled his hands with incense taken from this altar, which, as before observed, was placed just at the entrance of the most holy place, over against the ark and mercy-seat; upon his entrance he put the incense on the fire in the censer, and entered into the most holy place with a cloud of smoke, Lev. xvi, 12, 13. The composition of the incense is mentioned Exod. xxx, 34, 35, &c. and being compounded, it was beaten small, (that it might immediately take fire) and so placed on this altar before the ark, ver. 36. And the placing of the incense "before the testimony," as there af-

firmed, is the same with what our apostle affirms, that the most holy place "*had it.*"

This golden altar of incense, as placed in the sanctuary, and whereon incense burned continually every morning and evening, was a type of Christ, giving efficacy, by his mediation and intercession, to the continual prayers of all believers, Psal. cxli, 2; Rev. viii, 4.

But that which the apostle in this place hath alone respect to, was the burning of the incense in the golden censer on the day of expiation, when the high priest entered into the most holy place; which represented only the personal mediatory prayer of Christ himself. Yet we must not so oblige ourselves to the seasons and order of these things, as to exclude the prayers which he offered to God *before* the oblation of himself. For by reason of the *imperfection* of these types, they could not represent the *order of things*, as they were to be accomplished in the person of Christ, who was both priest and sacrifice, altar, tabernacle, and incense. Although therefore the offering of incense from the golden altar in the most holy place was *after* the offering of sacrifice on the altar of burnt-offerings, yet was the mediatory prayer of Christ for the church of the elect, by which he also prepared and sanctified himself to be a sacrifice, thereby typified.

§5. The second thing in this part of the tabernacle is, (την κιβωτον της διαθηκης) *the ark of the covenant*. This, with the mercy-seat wherewith it was covered, was the most glorious and mysterious utensil of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple; the most eminent pledge of the divine presence, the most mysterious representation of the holy properties of his nature in Christ. This, as the heart of all divine service, was first formed; all other things had a relation to it, Exod. xxv, 10, 11. Sometimes it is called "the ark of the

testimony," because God called the tables of the covenant by the name of his "testimony," or that which testified his will to the people, and which, by the people's acceptance of the terms of it, was to be a perpetual witness between God and them, Exod. xxv, 16; chap. xxx, 18, &c. On the same account it is called "the ark of covenant:" and lastly, it was called "the ark of God," because it was the most eminent pledge of the special presence of God among the people.

As to its fabric, it was (*παντοθεν*) *every way*, within and without, overlaid with plates of beaten gold.

This, as I said before, being the most sacred and glorious instrument of the sanctuary, so severe was the exclusion of all flesh from the sight of it, the high priest only excepted, who entered that holy place once a year, and that not without blood; as that the nations about took it to be the God that the Israelites worshipped, 1 Sam. iv, 8; and all neglects about it, or contempt of it, were most severely punished. From the *tabernacle* it was carried into the *temple* built by Solomon; wherein it continued until the Babylonian captivity; and what became of it afterwards is altogether uncertain.

God gave this ark that it might be a representation of Christ, as we shall shew; and he took it away, to increase the desire and expectation of the church after him. And,

As it was the glory of God to *hide* and cover the mysterious counsels of his will under the Old Testament, whence this ark was so hidden from the eyes of all men; so under the New Testament it is his glory to *reveal* and make them open in Christ Jesus, 2 Cor. iii, 18.

§6. In (or rather adjoining to) this ark there were three things:

1. "The *golden pot* that had manna." When the manna first fell, every one was commanded to gather an omer, for his own eating, Exod. xvi, 16; and God appointed that a pot be provided, which should hold an omer, to be filled with manna that was to be laid up before the Lord for their generations, ver. 38, there was it miraculously preserved from putrefaction, whereas of itself it would not keep *two days*. The pot was to be made of that which was most durable, as being to be kept for a memorial throughout all generations. And the reason of the sacred preservation of this manna in the most holy place was, because it was a type of Christ, as himself declares, John vi, 48—51.

2. "*Aaron's rod* that budded." This rod originally was that wherewith Moses fed the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro, in the wilderness, which he had in his hand when God called to him out of the bush. And thence God ordained it to be the token of the putting forth of his miraculous power, having confirmed by trial the faith of Moses concerning it, Exod. iv, 17; hereby it became *sacred*; and when Aaron was called to the office of the priesthood, it was delivered to his keeping. For on the *budding* of it, on the trial about the priesthood, it was laid up before the testimony, that is, the *ark*, Num. xvii, 10. That same rod did Moses take from before the testimony, when he was to smite the rock, and work a miracle, of which this was consecrated to be the outward sign, Num. xx, 8—11; hereof the apostle affirms only that it "budded;" but in the sacred story it is added, that it "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds;" being originally cut from an almond tree; Num. xvii, 8; but the apostle mentions what was sufficient to his purpose.

This *rod of Moses* belonged to the holy furniture of the tabernacle, because the spiritual rock that followed them was to be smitten with the rod of the law; that it might give out the waters of life to the church.

3. The last thing mentioned is, “the *tables* of the covenant.” The two tables of stone cut out by Moses, and written on with the finger of God, containing the ten commandments, which were the substance of God’s covenant with the people; they were by the express command of God put into the ark, Exod. xxv, 16; chap. xxxiii, 18; chap. xl, 22; Deut. x, 5; and there was *nothing else* in the ark, (the closed ark) but these two tables of stone, 1 Kings viii, 9; 2 Chron. v, 10, &c. before it, or at the *ends* of it, adjoining to it, were the pot of manna, and the miracle-working rod. Neither of these were of any actual use in the service of God, but only were kept as sacred *memorials*; being placed *by it* for that end, they were *reckoned* with the ark. This connexion of them with the ark, the apostle expresseth by the preposition (*ev*) *in, with, by*, &c. from the Hebrew (ב) *beth*; now this preposition is so frequently used in the scripture to signify adhesion, conjunction, approximation, appurtenance of one thing to another, that it is mere cavilling to assign it any other signification in this place, or to restrain it to *inclusion* only, the things themselves requiring the other sense; see Job xix, 20; Deut. vi, 7; 1 Sam. i, 42; Hos. iv, 3; Luke i, 17; Josh. x, 10; Matt. xxi, 12, &c.

§7. From the whole we may deduce the following observations:

1. The more of Christ, by way of representation or exhibition, any institutions of divine worship express, the more sacred are they in their use and exercise. But,
2. Christ alone is in himself really the most holy, the spring and fountain of all holiness to the church.

3. The mediatory intercession of Jesus Christ was a sweet savor to God, and efficacious for the salvation of the church. The smoke of this perfume covered the true ark and mercy-seat.

4. The efficacy of Christ's intercession depends on his oblation. It was fire from the altar of burnt offerings wherewith the incense was kindled.

5. The glory of these types did no way answer the glory of the antitype, or that which was represented by them. They were all but *carnal things* in comparison of the spiritual glory of Christ.

6. We are always to reckon that the efficacy and prevalency of all our prayers depend on the incense which is in the hand of our merciful High Priest. It is offered with the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii, 4.

VERSE 5.

And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat: of which we cannot now speak particularly.

§1. The subject stated. §2 (I.) The cherubims of glory. §3. (II.) The mercy-seat. §4 A brief description of the utensils of the most holy place §5. Remarks on the decalogue. §6. On the propitiatory. §7. Christ the substance of them all. §8. General observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle proceedeth in this description of the immediate appurtenances of the ark. Having declared what had an immediate *reference* to it, as the golden censer; what was *before* it, as the pot of manna and Aaron's rod; and what was *within* it, the tables of the covenant; he now sheweth what was *over* it; *viz.* the cherubims of glory and—the mercy-seat.

§2. (I.) "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing." The making, form, fashion and use of these cherubims is declared, Exod. xxv; the signification of

the name, and their original shape or form, any farther than that they were (*alata animata*) *winged creatures*, are not certainly known.

They were two in number, one at each end of the ark or mercy-seat; their faces were *turned inwards* one towards another. This posture gave to the whole work of the ark, mercy-seat, and cherubims, the form of a *seat*, which represented the throne of God. From thence he spake, whence the whole was called (רִבִּי) *the oracle*.

As to their place and *posture*, they were *over* the ark; for they had feet whereon they *stood*, 2 Chron. iii, 13; and these feet were joined in one continued beaten work to the ends of the mercy-seat which was *upon* the ark; wherefore they were wholly over, or *above it*. Those in the tabernacle were of *beaten gold*, being but of small dimensions, Exod. xxv, 18; but those in the temple of Solomon were made of the wood of the *olive tree* overlaid with gold. For they were very large, extending their wings to the whole breadth of the oracle which was *twenty cubits*, 1 Kings, vi, 23; 2 Chron. iii, 10; they are called "*cherubims of glory*," not only from their *matter* but their *position and use*. Stretching out their wings on high, and looking inwards with an appearance of veneration, and so compassing the mercy-seat with their wings, all but the fore part of it, they made a representation of a *glorious seat* or throne.

But I must add, that by "*glory*" here, the majesty and presence of God himself is eminently intended. The cherubims "*of glory*;" that ~~is~~, that represented the *glorious presence* of God himself, as he dwelt *typically* among the people. His *real* presence is in Christ, who is *Immanuel*, and who is therefore called "the Glory of Israel," Luke ii, 32.

§3. (II.) "The mercy-seat;" the making and frame of it is declared, Exod. xxv, 17. In the Hebrew it is called *capporeth* or *cipporeth*, from *caphar*. The verb in *kal*, signifies to *cover*, to *pitch over*, and thereby to *cover*, Gen. vi, 14; thence is *capporeth*, "a covering." But this is rendered by our apostle (ἱλαστήριον) a *propitiatory*, a *mercy-seat*. And in that sense it is derived from *kipper*, in *pihel*, which signifies to *remove*, or take away, and consequently to be *propitious* and merciful in taking away sin; as also to *appease*, *atone*, *reconcile*, and *purge*, whereby sin is taken away.

The matter of this mercy-seat was of pure beaten gold; the measures of it exactly answering to that of the ark; two cubits and an half the length of it, and a cubit and an half the breadth of it, Exod. xxv, 10—17. It was put "above upon the ark;" ver. 21; what the *thickness* of it was, there is no mention. The Jews say it was *an hand breadth*, which is not likely. However, it was of considerable substance; for the cherubims were beaten out of it, at its ends; ver. 18, 19; it was laid immediately on the ark, having, as we observed, the just dimensions of it. But the ark had a *fringe* or "*crown of gold round about it*;" that is, on its sides and ends, Exod. xxv, 11; chap. xxxvii, 2, which was so placed on the outsides of it, that it diminished nothing of the proportion before mentioned. Wherefore the mercy-seat being exactly of the same measure, it fell in upon it, on the inside of the border or crown of gold. It is certain that this propitiatory, and the cherubims belonging to it, were never to be separated from the ark; but when it was to be removed and carried *by the staves*, they were carried upon it. This is evident from hence, that, since all the other golden utensils had rings and staves wherewith they were borne, these had none, but must be carried in the hands of men if they were

not inseparable from the ark, which cannot be supposed. And when the men of Bethshemesh looked into the ark, it doth not appear that they first took off the mercy-seat with the cherubims, and then brake up the covering of the ark; but only lifted up the mercy-seat by the cherubims, which opened the ark, and discovered what was in it, Judges vi, 19. I therefore conclude, that this mercy-seat was the *only covering* of the ark above, falling in close with the crown of gold, exactly answering it in its dimensions.

§4. This is a brief description of the utensils of the most holy place. The ark, which was the heart and centre of the whole, was placed at the *west end* of it, with its end towards the sides of the place, the face to the entrance, and the back part to the west end. *Before* it, was placed the pot of manna and the rod that budded; at one end of it was placed the book of the law; in the ark was the testimony, or the two tables of stone. When they were put into it, it was covered with the mercy-seat, and that shadowed with the wings of the cherubims. At the entrance into the holiest was the golden altar of incense with the golden censer; which although, as our apostle shews, it did in its *use* principally respect the service of this part of the tabernacle, yet could not be placed within the veil, because the high priest was not to enter himself until he had raised a cloud of incense through which he entered.

The apostle having given this account of the sanctuary in both parts of it, and what was contained in them, adds, "of which we cannot now speak particularly;" or rather, concerning which things it is not now a reason to speak particularly, or of the several parts of it, one by one. And the reason was, because he had an *especial design* to manage, from the consideration of the *whole fabric*, viz. the service of the high priest

in it; from which the particular consideration of each part by itself would have too much diverted him. However, he plainly intimates that all, and every one of them in particular, were of singular consideration, as typical of the Lord Christ and his ministry. Only it seems good to the Holy Ghost not to give to the church a particular application of them in this place, but hath left it to our humble diligence to seek after it out of the scripture, according to the analogy of faith, and such rules of interpretation as himself giveth.

The apostle's whole discourse in this and the ensuing chapter, is to manifest the representation of Christ in them all. And those who would have only an application to be made of something to Christ by way of *accommodation* or *allusion*, (as the *Socinians* contend) reject the wisdom of God in their institution, and expressly contradict the whole scope of the apostle. We have therefore nothing else to do but to find out their resemblance—as an effect of divine wisdom, and by virtue of divine institution—to God's being in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

§5. The life and soul of all this service was the *decatalogue*, written in tables of stone, called the tables of the covenant. This (in the main) is the eternal unalterable rule of our relation to God, as rational creatures, capable of moral obedience and eternal rewards. To this was all the *service* related, as *prefiguring* the way whereby the church might be freed from the guilt of its transgressions.

This law, as to the *substance* of it, was the *only law of creation*, the rule of the first covenant of works. For it contained the sum of that obedience which is due to God for all rational creatures made in his image. Although the law, as a *covenant*, was broken and disannulled by the entrance of sin, and became

insufficient, as to its *first ends*—the *justification* and *salvation* of the church, Rom. viii, 3; yet, as a *law* and *rule of obedience*, it was never *disannulled*, nor would God suffer it to be; yea, one principal design of God in Christ was, that it might be fulfilled and established, Matt. v, 17, 18; Rom. iii, 31; for to reject, or to abrogate this law, had been for God to have laid aside that glory of his holiness and righteousness which in his infinite wisdom he designed by it.

§6. We may farther remark, that the covering of the ark was a *propitiatory*, a mercy-seat, and that its use was to cover the law in the presence of God. This was a great instruction; for if God should mark iniquities according to the law, who should stand? The blood of the atonement for sin was brought into the holy place and sprinkled on the mercy-seat, Lev. xvi, 14; and this was done *seven times* to denote the perfection of the reconciliation made. The *cloud of incense* that covered both ark and mercy-seat, testified that God received from thence a savor of rest, Lev. xvi, 13; the cherubims, or, angels under that denomination, were the ministers of God in executing the curse and punishment on man when, after his sin, he was driven out of the garden of God, Gen. iii, 24; but now, to testify that all things in heaven and earth should be reconciled and brought under one head, Ephes. i, 10; there was a representation of their ministry, Heb. i, 14; purely with respect to the mercy-seat, towards which their faces were turned, and which they shadowed with their wings.

Yet was the mystery represented by these types so great, that the angels themselves were to bow down to look into it, 1 Pet. i, 11. Hence are they represented in a posture of admiration and adoration. And in their overshadowing of the mercy-seat with their

wings, they declared that this mystery, in the fulness of it, was hid from the eyes of all men. See Ephes. iii, 8—12.

§7. Not to descend to farther particulars, the end of them all was to give such a representation of the mystery of divine grace in Christ Jesus, as was meet for the state of the church before his actual exhibition in the flesh. Hence he is declared in the gospel to be the *body* and substance of them all.

In his *obedience to God*, according to the law, he is the true *ark*, wherein the law was kept inviolate, that is, fulfilled. Hence by God's gracious dealing with sinners, pardoning and justifying them freely, the law is not disannulled but established, Rom. iii, 31; that this was to be done, that without it no covenant between God and man could be firm and stable, was the principal design of God to declare in all this service; without which consideration it was wholly insignificant. Then had the law its "crown and glory," when it was fulfilled in Christ. He was also the *mercy-seat*. God set him forth to be (*ἱλαστήριον*, Rom. iii, 25;) a *propitiation*, that is, to answer the *mercy-seat* and what was signified by it. With respect to the *obedience* it required, Christ was the *ark* in whom it was fulfilled; and with respect to the *curse of the law*, he was the *mercy-seat* or *propitiation*, whereby atonement was made, that the curse should not be inflicted, Gal. iii, 13.

It was *his blood typically* that was carried into the holy place to make atonement; as the apostle declares at large in this chapter. The efficacy of his blood, when he offered himself to God an expiatory sacrifice for sin, it prevailed for an atonement in the holy place not made with hands. See chap. x, 11—13.

. It was *his intercession* that was denoted by the *cloud of incense*; and it was *he* who took off the *original curse of the law*, the first execution of which was committed to the cherubims; he was the *bread of life* typified by the manna kept in the golden pot before the *mercy-seat*; being the nourishment of the spiritual life of men, John vi, 31, 34; *he* was that *spiritual rock* which was smitten with the rod of Moses—the curse and stroke of the law. It was by this means the waters of life flowed from him, for the quickening and refreshment of the church, 1 Cor. x, 3, 4. Thus was the Lord Christ “all in all” from the *beginning*. And as the general design of the *whole structure* and furniture of the tabernacle was to declare that God was reconciled to sinners, with a blessed provision for the glory of his holiness, and the honor of the law, which is in and by Jesus Christ alone; so every thing in it directed to *his person*, or his *grace*, or some *act* of his mediation.

§8. Some things we may also *observe* in general for our own instruction, from what we have discoursed:

1. Although the sovereign will and pleasure of God be the only reason and original cause of all instituted worship, yet there is, and ever was, in all his institutions such evident wisdom and goodness, as gives them beauty and usefulness to their proper end; there is that in them which, to an enlightened mind, will distinguish them for ever from the most plausible inventions of men invented in imitation of them. A diligent inquiry into them, not an imitation of them, is expected from us, Psal. cxi, 2, 3; Hos. iv, 9.

2. All the counsels of God concerning his worship in this world, and his eternal glory in the salvation of the church, centre in the person and mediation of

Christ; from hence was the life, glory, and usefulness of these things.

VERSES 6, 7.

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God; but into the second went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people.

§1. Introduction. §2. The priests alone entering into the first tabernacle. §3. How often. §4. For what purpose. §5. The High Priest alone entering into the second. §6. How often. §7. With blood, offered. §8. For himself and the people. §9. Observations

§1. **H**AVING given an account of the structure of the tabernacle, in the *two parts* of it, and the *furniture* of those several parts distinctly; to complete his argument the apostle adds in these verses the consideration of their sacred use. "*Now when these things*" (*τε, vero,*) *now*, or *but*; we render it "*now when*," because the latter is included in the *tense* of the word following.

When these things were thus (*κατεσκευασμένων*) *ordained*, and *ordered*, they stood not for a magnificent shew, but were designed for constant use in the service of God.

§2. "The *priests* went always into the *first tabernacle*." They *alone* entered into the sanctuary; all others were forbidden to approach it on pain of excision. These priests were the *posterity of Aaron*, unless excepted by some legal incapacitating blemish. The *inspection* of the whole was committed, in an especial manner, to the *high priest*, Num. iv, 10; Zech. iii, 7; yea, the actual performance of the *daily service* of this part of the sanctuary was in the *first*

place charged on him; Exod. xxvii, 21; but the other priests being designed to *assist* him on all occasions, this service in process of time *wholly* devolved on them. And if the high priest did at any time minister in this part of the sanctuary, he did it not as the *high priest*, but as a priest only; for all his peculiar service belonged to the most holy place.

Yet must it be observed, that although this was the peculiar service of the priests, yet was it not their *only service*; for to them belonged the offering of sacrifices, which was accomplished in the court without, on the brazen altar, before the door of the tabernacle; the mentioning of which did not answer the apostle's purpose in this place.

This was the great privilege of the priests under the Old Testament, that *they alone* might enter into the sanctuary, and make an approach to God; and this privilege they had merely as they were types of Christ: but under the gospel it is one of the principal *privileges of believers*, that, being made "kings and priests unto God" by Jesus Christ, this distinction, as to special gracious access to God, is taken away, Rev. i, 5; Eph. ii, 18; Rom. v, 2.

§5. (Διὰ παντός εισιέναι) "*they went always, into the first tabernacle.*" They were to *enter*, but to go "no farther; they were not even to look into the most holy place, nor to *abide* in the sanctuary when the high priest entered into it, which the apostle here hath an especial regard to. They *entered into* the first tabernacle, but they *went no farther*. The first veil, or the covering of the door of the tabernacle, Exod. xxvi, 36, 37; being only turned aside as they entered, it closed immediately on their entrance into the sanctuary. And this they were to do with an especial reverence of the presence of God, which is the principal

design of that command, "thou shalt reverence my sanctuary," Lev. xix, 30. They entered it (*δια παντος, quovis tempore, jugiter*) *always, every day*. There was no divine *prohibition* as to *any times*, wherein they might not enter into the sanctuary as there was with respect to the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place, which was allowed once a year; and their services required that they should enter into them *daily*; but the word doth not absolutely signify "every day," seeing there was a special service for which they entered only *once a week*, but includes *all times*, as occasion required.

§4. (Τας λατρειας επιτελοντες) *accomplishing the services*. The expression is sacred, respecting mystical rites and ceremonies. It is not perfecting or accomplishing only, but *sacredly ministering*. In their discharge of the priestly office, accomplishing the sacred services committed to them. This consisted in—*dressing the lamps* of the candlestick; supplying them with holy oil and cleaning them, that their light might be properly preserved—*burning incense* every day with fire taken from the altar of burnt offerings, which was in the court before the door of the tabernacle; and this was performed, evening and morning, immediately after the daily sacrifice—*changing the shewbread* every sabbath in the morning, &c.

§5. "But into the *second* went (*μονος ο αρχιερευς*) *the high priest alone*," and no other person, Lev. xvi, 2, 32; and he was to be *sa alone*, as that *none were to attend* in order to assist him in any part of the service; yea, no one was allowed to be in the *other part* of the sanctuary where he might so much as see the veil opened, verse 17, but all the *priests*, as well as the people, were kept without the sanctuary. Hence there was always provided, the next in succession, to

perform this office in case of sickness or occasional pollutions of the actual high priest; and he was called the *second priest*, 1 Kings xxv, 16. From whence in times of disorder and confusion they had afterwards ~~two~~ high priests at once. This *entrance* was a type, both of the entrance of Christ into *heaven*, and of our entrance by him to the *throne of grace*, ver. 24, chap. x, 19, 20. And this was the *veil* which, in the temple, was rent from top to bottom, upon the death of our Savior, Mat. xxvii, 51. For by Christ the way was laid open to the holy place, and the gracious presence of God discovered to all that come to God by him.

§6. "Once every year." The first order to this purpose was a *prohibition*, or negative precept, that the high priest should not come *at all times* into the holy place, Lev. xvi, 2; that is, *not every day*, as he did into the sanctuary; not at any time of his own choice. Afterwards it was limited to *once a year*, and the precise *day of the year* was determined by the law, viz. the tenth day of the seventh month, or Tizri, which answered nearly to our September: this was the great day of atonement, Lev. xvi, 29.

But whereas it is said that he entered *once every year*; the meaning is, that upon *one day* in the year only he did so; for it is evident that on that day he went *twice* into it, yea, most probably, *four* times. For he killed not the *goat* until he came out of the holy place, after he had carried in the blood of the *sacrifice for himself*, Lev. xvi, 3—11—14; after this he carried the blood of the *goat* that was offered for the sins of the people, ver. 15, and it is highly probable that, before he carried in the blood, he was to go in with the incense to make a cloud on the mercy-seat. And it is evident he could not carry the incense

and the blood at the same time; wherefore this "once every year" intends on the *one day* only.

§7. "*Not without blood, which he offered.*" After the high priest had filled the holy place with a cloud of incense, he returned to the altar of burnt offering without the tabernacle, where the sacrifice had been newly slain; and whilst the blood of the beasts was *fresh*, and as it were *living*, Heb. x. 20, he took of it in his hand, and entering again into the holy place sprinkled it seven times with his finger towards the mercy-seat, Lev. xvi, 11—14. And there is an emphasis on the expression, *not without blood*, to manifest how impossible it was that there should be an entrance into the gracious presence of God, without the blood of the sacrifice of Christ. The only propitiation for sins is made by his blood, and it is by faith alone that we are made partakers of it, Rom, ii. 25, 26.

"*Which he offered;*" where, or when he offered it, is not expressed; in the holy place there was no use of blood, but only for the *sprinkling* of it; but the sprinkling of blood was always *consequential* to the offering properly so called; for the *oblation* consisted principally in the *atonement* made by the blood at the altar of burnt offerings, Lev. xvii, 11; wherefore by the Greek term (προσφέρει) he intends (הביא) only to *bring* and not to *offer* properly.

§8. "For himself and the errors of the people;" he hath respect to the distinct sacrifices that were to be offered on that day; the first was of a bullock and a ram, which was for *himself*. Such was the imperfection of their state, that they could have no priest to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people, but he must first offer for himself the blood of other creatures.

The blood was also offered for the people, that is, the whole congregation, representing all the elect of God; to offer "for the *errors* of the people," is to offer, for all their sins, of whatever nature they were, Lev. xvi, 21; and they are thus called, because indeed there is no sin in this world in which there is not a *mixture of error*; see 1 Tim. i, 13; Mat. xii, 31, 22; here indeed lies the original of all sin. The mind being filled with darkness and ignorance, alienates the whole soul from the life of God.

§9. We shall now proceed to observe,

1. A continual application to God by Christ; and a continual application of the benefits of the mediation of Christ by faith, are the springs of the light, life, and comfort of the church.

2. *Spiritual illumination* of the mind is indispensably necessary to our walking with God. Those who would be preserved from sin must take care that their *spiritual light* always bear sway in their minds; and to that end constantly watch against the prevalence of corrupt prejudices. When the light of the mind is solicited by temptations, it should suspend its determination on present circumstances, and know that sin lies at the door; and if *error* grow strong in the heart, through the love of sin, *truth* will grow weak in the mind, as to its victorious influence to preserve the soul from its baneful influence; and nothing ought to influence the soul more to repentance, sorrow, and humiliation for *sin*, than a due apprehension of the *shameful error* and mistake there is in it.

VERSE 5.

The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest: all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

§1. Connection and design. §2. (I.) Exposition of the words, *The Holy Ghost signifying*. §3. *The way into the holiest, what.* §4. *How and when made manifest.* §5. *What meant by the first tabernacle, and its continuance.* §6. (II.) Observation. Divine ordinances are filled with sufficient wisdom. §7. Other observations.

§1. **T**HE apostle in this verse enters on a declaration of the use which he designed to make of the description of the tabernacle, its furniture and utensils, which he had before laid down. Now this was not to give a particular account of the nature, use, and signification of every thing in them; but, from the consideration of the whole, in its structure, order, and service, he would prove the dignity, pre-eminence, and efficacy of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice: and hence would he manifest the unspeakable advantage of the church in the removal of the one and introduction of the other.

§2. (I.) "*The Holy Ghost thus signifying;*" HE who, by his word and works, teacheth the church as a divine person; for acts of understanding, will, power, and authority, are the acts of a person. We intend no more by a "person" but one that hath an understanding, will, and power of his own, which he is able to act and exert.

The way whereby he gave this instruction was, by signifying, declaring manifestly, evidently, openly, the things intended; and this signification was made in the nature and order of the things appointed, the framing of the tabernacle, and the constitution of the services.

§3. That which the Holy Ghost did thus *signify*, and instruct the church in, was, "that the way into the holiest of all," the way of the holies, "was not yet made manifest."

The apostle by (*αἱων*) *holies*, intends the same with what he called ver. 3, (*αἷα των αἱων*) *the holy of holies*, as he declares in the foregoing verse; only whereas he *there* speaks of the material fabric of the tabernacle, *here* he designs what was thereby signified; for he declares not what these things *were*, but what the Holy Ghost did *signify* by them. Now in that most holy place were all the signs and pledges of the *gracious presence of God*; the testimonies of our reconciliation to God by the blood of the atonement, and our peace with him. Wherefore to enter into these holies is nothing but an access with liberty, freedom, and boldness, into the *gracious presence of God*, on account of reconciliation and peace. The atonement being made and received by faith, conscience being purged, bondage and fear being removed, believers now enter with reverential boldness into this gracious divine presence.

The *way* into these holies, which was not yet made manifest, is no other than the *sacrifice of Christ*, the true high priest of the church; for by the entrance of the high priest into the most holy place with blood, the Holy Ghost did signify, that the way into it, the way for believers to enter by, was only the one true sacrifice which he was to offer: and accordingly, to indicate the accomplishment of the type, when Jesus expired on the cross, having offered himself to God to expiate our sins, "the veil of the temple," which inclosed the holy place, "was rent from the top to the bottom," whereby it was laid open to all, Matt. xxvii, 51.

§4. "Not yet made manifest." He doth not say, that there *was no way* then into the most holy place, none made, none provided, none made use of; but there was not (*Φανερωσις*) *an open manifestation* of it. There was an entrance under the Old Testament into the presence of God, as to grace and glory, which was "the virtue of the oblation of Christ;" but this was as yet not *made manifest*. And this *open manifestation* of the way into the holiest, which the apostle denies to the Old Testament church, consists in these three things:

1. In the *actual exhibition* of Christ in the flesh, and his sacrifice of himself, making atonement for sin; for hereby alone was the way laid open to an access with boldness into the gracious presence of Jehovah.

2. In the full *plain declaration* of the nature of his person and mediation. The gospel is the declaration and manifestation of this way, and our sole direction how to make use of it, or how to enter by it into the most holy place.

3. In the *revelation* and establishment of those privileges of gospel worship, whereby believers are led comfortably into the presence of God, as chap. x, 19, 20; for they are full of light and grace, and a guide to all the steps of faith and obedience.

§5. "While as the first tabernacle was yet standing." By the "*first tabernacle*" the apostle understands the *whole worship* instituted together with it and belonging to it, celebrated afterwards in the temple according to the laws of that tabernacle; for there was the same worship, and the same order of things, in the one and the other; and so the same *signification*, made at first by the Holy Ghost in the constitution of the tabernacle, was still continued under the temple.

It was continued "whilst this first tabernacle," or the tabernacle in this sense, "was standing." *Having its station*; that is, according to the mind of God, it had its state and use in the church—*absolutely*, until the death of Christ, and no longer; for until then both Christ himself and all his disciples continued to observe all its services according to the mind of God: for he was "made under the law of it" whilst it was in force. *Declaratively*, it continued until the day of Pentecost; for then, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, the foundation of the gospel church, state, order, and worship, was solemnly laid; on which a *new way* of worship being established, the abrogation of the *old* was declared. *Actually*, it continued until the destruction of the temple, city, and people, some years after. Its first station it had in God's *appointment*, the second in his *connivance*, and the third in his *patience*.

It is the *first* of these that is here intended. "The tabernacle," that is, the *laws and service* of it, preserved its station and use in the church, by God's ordinance and appointment to the death of Christ. Then did he pronounce concerning it, and all things belonging to it; "*it is finished*." Then was the veil rent, and the way into the holiest laid open. Then was peace with God publicly confirmed by the blood of the cross, Eph. ii, 14, 15; and the nature of the way of our access to him made known.

§6. (II.) From what has been said we observe:

1. That the divine ordinances and institutions of worship are filled with wisdom sufficient for the instruction of the church in all the mysteries of faith and obedience. How eminent was the divine wisdom of the Holy Ghost, in the structure and order of this tabernacle! What *provision* of instruction for the present and future use of the church was laid up in them!

2. It is our duty with all humble diligence to inquire into the mind of the Holy Ghost in all ordinances and institutions of divine worship. No creatures can fall into higher contempt of God, than those who imagine that the old institutions had no regard to things spiritual and eternal; they can see nothing in them but so much gold and silver, and the like, framed into this and that shape, and applied to outward uses; but those who with humility and diligence exercise themselves in such inquiries, shall find plain satisfactory significations of his mind and will respecting those things of which others are utterly ignorant.

§7. Some things we may farther observe, which also tend to a fuller explication of the mind of the Holy Ghost in the text.

1. Although Christ was not actually exhibited in the flesh, yet had believers under the Old Testament access to the divine favor; they enjoyed the blessing though the cause and means of it were not manifestly declared.

2. The design of the Holy Ghost in all the tabernacles, its ordinances and institutions of worship, was to direct the faith of believers to what was signified by them.

3. Typical institutions, diligently attended to, were sufficient to direct the faith of the church, to expect the real expiation of sin, and acceptance with God by that means.

4. Though the *standing* of the first tabernacle was a great mercy, yet the *removal* of it was a greater; for it made way for bringing in what was better.

5. The Divine Wisdom in revealing the way into the holiest, or, of grace and acceptance with himself, is a blessed object of our contemplation.

6. The *clear manifestation* of the way of redemption, expiation of sin, and peace with God, is the great privilege of the gospel.

7. There is no access into the gracious presence of God, but by the sacrifice of Christ alone.

VERSES 9, 10.

Which was a figure for the time present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and diverse washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

§1. Introduction and general design. §2. (I.) Exposition. The tabernacle a parabolical institution. §3. For a season. §4. With its offerings. §5. Their insufficiency with respect to the conscience. §6—8. Wherein they consisted. §9. How imposed. §10. Their continuance. §11, 12. (II.) Observations.

§1. **EX**POSITORS have made use of various conjectures in their commentaries on this place. I shall not detain the reader in the examination of them; but shall give that interpretation of the text, which I hope will evidence its truth to those who impartially seek after it, and are in any measure acquainted with the things treated of.

The apostle in these two verses gives a summary account and reason of the imperfection of the first tabernacle and all its services, wherein the administration of the first covenant consisted. This was direct and proper to his present argument; for his design is to prove the pre-eminence of the new covenant above the old, from the excellency of its *High Priest*, with *his tabernacle* and *sacrifice*. To this end a discovery of the imperfections and weakness of the first tabernacle and services, was indispensably necessary.

§2. (I.) "Which was a figure?" (ἥτις) *which*; some would refer it to the following word (παράβολη) *figure*, and so read, "*which figure was for the time present.*" But there is no cause of this traduction of the words. The verb substantive (ἦν) *was*, is deficient, as usual, and is to be supplied as in our translation, "*which was;*" *which*, that is (σκηνη) *tabernacle*; the structure and parts of it, with all its furniture and services, as before described. (Παράβολη) *figure*, as we render it, is very variously rendered by interpreters, (*figura, exemplar, exemplum comparatio, similitudo, typus, representatio*) but the proper sense of the word as used in scripture, is not a figure or *likeness* but (ܠܡܥܠܐ) *a parable*, as it is rendered by the *Syriac*.

Our Lord expressly opposeth speaking in *parables*, to a clear, plain, open teaching, so as to be understood of all. See Matt. xiii, 10—13; John xvi, 28, 29. "Now speakest thou *openly* and no *parable*." Wherefore the word (παράβολη) in this place, is an obscure, mystical, metaphorical instruction. God taught the old church the mysteries of our redemption through Christ by the tabernacle, its fabric, parts, utensils, and services; yet it was but an obscure, *parabolical, figurative instruction*. So should the word be here rendered, "*a figurative instruction;*" or else the word "*parable*" should be retained, as it is in other places.

§3. (Εἰς τον καιρον τον νυνεσθηκοια) *to this present time*. It served until this present season wherein the gospel is preached, and all the things signified by it are accomplished. But it is well rendered by our translators, "*the time then present;*" as if (τότε) *then* had been in the text. The *time then present* when the tabernacle was made and erected; for the the apostle, in this whole discourse, not only respects the tabernacle, and

not the temple, but considers the *first erection* of it in a peculiar manner.

This kind of instruction, whatever it may now seem to us, was very proper for them to whom it was given. And, by the administration of grace in it, was a blessed means to ingenerate faith, love and obedience in the hearts and lives of many to an eminent degree. And we may consider from hence what is required of us to whom the *clear revelation* of the wisdom, grace, and love of God are made known from the bosom of the Father by the Son himself.

§4. "In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices." (*Kαὶ ὅν, i. e. ἐν ᾧ*) *in which time*, during which season; for immediately upon the setting up of the tabernacle, God gave to Moses, laws and institutions for all the gifts and sacrifices to be offered, with directions concerning the way and manner of offering them.

And the apostle here distributes all the (*לרבנים*) *sacred offerings*, into (*δωρα καὶ θυσίας*) *unbloody and bloody sacrifices*; as he did before, chap. v, 10, &c.

Of them all he affirms, (*προσφερονται*) "*they are offered*;" not that they *were* so: for he erects a *scheme* of the first tabernacle and all its service, at its first institution, and presents it to the consideration of the Hebrews, as if it were then first erected.

§5. "That could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience." This was the *end* aimed at, this was *represented* in and by them; and if they could not really *effect* it, they were weak and imperfect, and so not always to be continued. The end represented was to make *atonement* for sin, that, his anger being pacified, they might have peace with God. There were two things to be considered in those sins for which God hath appointed that atonement should be made; the *first* was, the temporal pun-

ishment which was due to them, according to the place which the law or covenant had in their commonwealth. The *other*, that eternal punishment was due to every sin by the law, as the rule of all moral obedience; for "the wages of *sin* is death." In the *former* of these, the person of the sinner in all his outward circumstances, his life, his goods, his liberty, and the like, were affected; in the *latter*, his "conscience," or the inward man alone was concerned. And as to the first of them, the gifts and sacrifices mentioned being rightly offered, were able (*ex opere operato*) of *themselves* to free the sinner from all temporal political detriment: so that his life and inheritance should be continued in the land of Canaan, or his state preserved entire in the commonwealth of Israel; and this the apostle here tacitly acknowledgeth. But as to the latter, wherein conscience was concerned, he denies that they had any such efficacy.

"They were not able," (*μη δυναμεναι*) the word agrees in gender only with (*θυσιαι*) *sacrifices*, and not with (*δωρα*) *gifts*, which being of the neuter gender, usually regulates the construction in such conjunctions. And I rather think that the apostle *confines* the impotency he mentions to slain and *bloody sacrifices*, by which alone atonement for sin was made. The words therefore should be read, "offered gifts, and sacrifices that could not (*τελειωσαι*) *perfect*."

They could not do it (*κατα συνειδησιν*) "*as to the conscience*" of the sinner before God, chap. x, 2. It will be said then, to what end did they serve? Were they of no use but only to free men from the penalties of the law or covenant, as it was a rule of their commonwealth, and the tenor of their possessions in Canaan? Yes, they were moreover part of the (*παραβολη*) *mystical instruction* which God granted the church in those

days, directing them to the one sacrifice and offering of Christ. This they typically represented, and through faith they were encouraged to apply the virtue and efficacy of it to their consciences every day. (Τὸν λαλρευοῦντα) "*him that did the service,*" was the priest only, but respect is had to every one that brought his gift or offering to the altar; chap. x, 1; particularly every one who brought his sacrifice to be offered, that atonement might be made for him. And (τελειῶσαι) to *make perfect*, comprehends the whole of divine worship in all individuals. He speaks not of purging our minds from *vices*, (as Grotius insinuates) but of purifying conscience by atonement made for the guilt of sin; and he opposeth not those sacrifices to the *doctrine* of the gospel, but to the sacrifice of Christ.

§6. "Which stood only in meats," &c. It is acknowledged that there is no small difficulty in the connexion of the words, or their relation to what precedes; and therefore expositors have multiplied conjectures about it, in whose examination we are not concerned. I shall therefore no farther consider any of them, than as they relate to what I judge to be the true coherence of the passage. The things instanced in comprize a great part of the *Levitical institutions*, and his assertion concerning them may, by a parity of reason, be extended to them all. For to render his description of them comprehensive, the apostle expresth them in a particular enumeration of the heads to which they might be reduced, "*meats and drinks and divers washings,*" and then to shew that he intends all things of a similar nature he adds the general nature of them all, that they were "*carnal ordinances.*"

(Μονον ἐπὶ βρωμασι) "*only in meats,*" &c. Whereas there is an ellipsis in the words, our translators have supplied it with, "*which stood;*" but it may be other-

wise supplied. For having mentioned the *gifts and sacrifices* of the law, the apostle makes an addition to them of the remaining institutions and ceremonies, whose very nature and use declared their insufficiency for the end in question: "*and other laws, only concerning meats and drinks, and divers washings:*" which in general he calls "*carnal rites.*" Hereby is the argument in hand carried on and completed.

§7. For the *nature* of them, they consisted in "*meats and drinks.*" *Meats*; or, things to be eaten, or not eaten, as being clean or unclean; an account of which is given, Lev. xi.; with reference to such things doth the apostle reflect on the Levitical institutions, in these words: "Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with their using," Col. ii, 21, 22; and the prohibition of "*drinking wine or strong drink* in the holy place," Lev. x, 8, 9, may be here respected; see also verse 17, 18. The laws concerning the feasts of the whole people, with their eating and drinking before the Lord, Lev. xxiii, may be also referred to, Lev. xxxiii. These divine ordinances were therefore "*concerning meats and drinks,*" that were necessary to be observed, with their offering of gifts and sacrifices, declaring of what nature they were. And the observance of them all was at the same time *imposed* on them.

They also consisted in, or were concerning (*διαφοροῖς βαπτισμοῖς*) "*divers washings.*" (*Βαπτισμός*) *baptism*, is any kind of washing, whether by dipping or sprinkling; putting the thing to be washed into the water, or applying the water to the thing itself to be washed. The apostle seems to have a particular respect to the *washings of the priests*, and of the offerings, in the court of the tabernacle before the altar; for those were such, as without which the gifts and sacrifices could not be rightly offered.

§8. It is added in the description, (*καὶ δικαιώμασι σαρκος*, *institutiis carnalibus*) "and carnal ordinances," *rights of worship* arbitrarily imposed, whose (*jus*) *right* depended on the pleasure of God; and they are said to be *of the flesh*, for the reason given, ver. 13. "They sanctified to the purifying of the flesh," and no more. The distinctive copulative (*καὶ*) *and*, seems therefore to contain an *addition* of all those legal ordinances which any way belonged to the purification of the law. The faith of believers now is rather *weakened* than confirmed by all things of the like nature, diverting their minds from an immediate respect to, and total dependence on the one sacrifice of Christ.

§9. Concerning all these things it is affirmed, that they were (*ἐπιτεθειμένα*) *imposed* on the people. I rather judge that in this word he had respect to *all the things* whereof he had discoursed from the very beginning of the chapter; and so the use of it in the *neuter* gender is proper.

They were things "imposed" on the people; properly, (*incumbentia*) *lying on them*, as a burden. There was a *weight* in all these legal rights and ceremonies, which is called a *yoke* too heavy for the people to bear, Acts xv, 10; and if the *imposition* of them be principally intended, it respects the bondage they were brought into by them; were so imposed on them, as that they might feel their weight, and groan under the burden.

§10. "Until the time of reformation;" whereas he had undeniably demonstrated that they were not to be of perpetual use in the church, nor could ever effect that state of perfection which God designed for it, he now declares that there was a certain *determinate season* fixed in the purpose and counsel of God, for their

cessation and removal—the time (*διορθωσις*) of *direction*.

The time intended is sufficiently known and agreed upon; the great season of the coming of the Messiah, as the king, priest, and prophet of the church, to order and alter all things, so as it might attain its *perfect state*; and it is thus called (*καιρος διορθωσεως*) because in it God finally disposed and directed all things in the church to his own glory, and the eternal salvation of his people, see Ephes. i, 10.

§11. (II.) We may hence observe:

1. There is a state of perfect peace with God to be obtained under imperfect obedience. For it is charged as a *weakness* in the legal administrations that *they* could not give such peace where any sin remained; it is therefore to be found only in the sacrifice of Christ. Being justified by *faith* we have peace with God.

2. Nothing can give perfect peace of conscience with God, but what can make atonement for sin; and whoever attempts it in any other way but by virtue of that atonement, will never attain it either here or hereafter.

§12. 1. There is nothing in its own nature so mean, but the will and authority of God can render it of sacred use and sacred efficacy, where he is pleased to ordain it. Such were the meats and drinks, and divers washings, under the law, which, however contemptible in themselves, had a religious use from the appointment of God.

2. The fixing of times and seasons for the state of things in the church, is solely in the hand of God, and at his sovereign disposal.

3. It is a great part of the blessed liberty which the Lord Christ brought into the church, that it enjoys freedom from *legal impositions*, and every thing of the like nature, in the worship of God.

4. The time of Christ's coming was the time of the general final reformation of divine worship, wherein all things were *unchangeably* directed to their proper use.

VERSE 11.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of his building.

§1. Connexion of the words. §2. (I.) Their exposition. The person spoken of. §3. Christ being come. §4. An High Priest. §5 By his own greater and more perfect tabernacle. §6, Not made with hands. §7, 8. (II.) Observations.

§1. **T**HE account of the Levitical priesthood, in sanctuary and services, was completed with the last verse. Amongst them the service of the *high priest* in the most holy place on the *day of expiation* was principally, though not exclusively, designed; for the whole description of the sanctuary, and the services of it, is also regarded in *comparison* between Christ in his office, and these things. "But Christ," &c.

§2. (I.) The person spoken of is (Χριστός) "*Christ*." I have observed before the variety of appellations by which the apostle on various occasions expresseth the divine Redeemer in this epistle, otherwise than he is wont to do in any other of his epistles; sometimes he calls him "Jesus" only, sometimes "Christ," sometimes "Jesus Christ," sometimes "the Son," and sometimes "the Son of God." And in this he had respect to the various notions which the Jewish church had concerning his *person* from the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament. And he employs none of them peculiarly but when there is a peculiar reason for it, as there is in this place: he doth not say "Jesus" is come,

or "the Son," or "the Son of God," but *Christ* being come; that is, the *Messiah* being come. Under that name and notion was he *promised* from the beginning, and the fundamental article of the faith of the church was, "that the Messiah was to come." Wherefore by calling him by this name, as it was most proper when he was to speak of his *coming*, so in it he minds the Hebrews of what was the ancient faith of their church concerning him, and what in general they expected on his coming.

§3. As a general foundation of what is afterwards ascribed to him, or the way whereby he entered on his office, he affirms that (*παράγενομενος*) *he is come*; intending the accomplishment of the ancient promise of Christ's exhibition in the flesh. For although the word is inseparable in its construction with what followeth, being come an high priest; yet his *coming* *itself* in order to the susception and discharge of that office is included. And upon this coming itself depended the demonstration of the faithfulness of God in his promises. This is the great fundamental article of the Christian religion, in opposition to Judaism, 1 John iv, 2, 3; and there is not only an argument here to the apostle's design, but that which being duly weighed, would fully determine all the controversy he had with these Hebrews. For all their legal administrations were only *subservient* to his *coming*, and representations of it, given to confirm the truth of the divine promises; wherefore upon his coming they must all necessarily cease, and be removed out of the church.

§4. "Being come an High Priest;" that is, in the room of the legal high priest, "of the good things to come." The high priests of the law were priests of "good things" *present*, not of the good things *promised*, and *to come*. And this is the force of the article

(*των*) of the good things; those which God had promised to the church, signified by all the legal ordinances, and which were the desire and expectation of the church in all preceding ages. In brief, all the good things in spiritual redemption and salvation which they looked for by the Messiah are here called the "*good things to come*." Those wherein the actual administration of his office consist, particularly his oblation and intercession, with their *effects*, which are all included in—*eternal redemption*.

§5. "By a greater and more perfect tabernacle." What the apostle hath immediate respect to in his account of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, is what he had at large declared concerning the tabernacle and the service of the high priest. Wherefore "he came by a tabernacle," in which he administered that office. The design of the apostle is to shew, that as he was an high priest, so he had a *tabernacle* in which he was to administer to God—his own *human nature*. The bodies of men are often called their *tabernacles*, 2 Cor. v, 1; 2 Pet. i, 14. And Christ called his own body "the *temple*," John ii, 19. His flesh was the *veil*, Hebrews x, 20. And in his incarnation he is said to "pitch his *tabernacle* among us," John i, 14. Herein dwelt the fulness of the godhead bodily, Col. ii, 9; that is, *substantially* represented by all the pledges of God's presence in the tabernacle of old, see on chap. viii, 2. The human nature of Christ, both in itself, its conception, gracious qualifications, and endowments, especially in its relation to and subsistence in the divine person of the Son, was incomparably "*more excellent*" and glorious than any material fabric could be. In this sense, for *comparative* excellency and dignity, is the Greek term (*μειζων*) almost constantly used in the New Testament. "*More perfect*." It was more perfectly

fitted and suited to the end of a tabernacle, both for the inhabitation of the divine nature and the means of exercising the sacerdotal office in making atonement for sin than the other was.

§6. It was (*α χειροποιητος*) *not made with hands*. The old tabernacle, whilst it stood, was the *temple of God*, and so it is constantly called by David in the Psalms. Temples were generally sumptuous and glorious fabrics; however, the best of them all were *made by the hands* of men; and so were no habitations for God, in the way he had designed to dwell among us, see 2 Chron. ii, 5, 6; John viii, 58, 59; "That is not of this building." Expositors generally take these words to be merely exegetical of the former; to me there seems to be an *auxesis* in them. It is so "not made with hands," as that it is not of the order of any other created thing. Wherefore God, speaking of it, saith, "The Lord hath created *a new thing* in the earth," Jer. xxxi, 22. It was an effect of the divine power above the whole order of this creation.

§7. (II.) From hence we may deduce the ensuing observations:

1. These things alone were the true and *real good things* that were intended for and promised to the church from the beginning of the world. The Jews had now utterly lost the true notion of them, which proved their ruin; and yet do they continue in the same fatal mistake to this day.

2. These things alone are *absolutely* good to the church; all other good things are good or evil as they are used or abused.

3. So excellent are these good things, as that the performance and procuring of them was the cause of the Son of God's *coming* with the susception and discharge of his sacerdotal office. Had they been of a

lower nature, so glorious a means had not been adopted for effecting them. Woe to them by whom they are despised! How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? And,

4. Such a price and value did God put on these things, so "*good*" are they in his eyes, as that he made them the subject of his promises to the church from the foundation of the world.

§8. We may observe, moreover, these particulars:

1. The human nature of Christ, wherein he discharged the duty of his sacerdotal office in making atonement for sin, is the *greatest*, the *most perfect* and excellent ordinance of God, excelling incomparably those that were most excellent under the Old Testament. The wonderful provision of this tabernacle will be the subject of holy admiration to eternity.

2. The Son of God undertaking to be the High Priest of the church it was necessary he should *come by* or have a *tabernacle* wherein to discharge that office; for being to save the church by virtue of that office, it could not be otherwise done than by the sacrifice of himself, by his own tabernacle.

3. God is so far from being *obliged* to any means for effecting the holy counsels of his will, as that he can when he pleaseth exceed the whole order of the first creation, and the general laws of his ruling providence.

VERSE 12.

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

§1. The apostle's general design ascertained. The Socinian interpretation refuted. §2. His particular design in this verse. §3. (1.) Christ's entrance into the holies. §4, 5 In virtue of his own blood. §6. Having obtained eternal redemption for us. §7. (11.) Observations.

§1. **THE** entrance of the high priest into the holy place was not his sacrifice; for it supposed his *sacrifice* to be offered *before*, in virtue of which, and with the memorial of it, he entered into the holiest; for *all sacrifices* were offered at the brazen altar, and that of the high priest on the day of expiation expressly, *Lev. xvi.* And the entrance of Christ into heaven was not the *oblation* of himself; for he *offered* himself to God "with strong cries and supplications;" but his entrance into heaven was triumphant. The high priest indeed carried of the *blood* into the holy place, and so may be said to enter into it with blood, as ver. 7, yet it is not *that* the apostle here intends, but the sacrifice at the altar, where the blood of it was shed and *offered*, and *by virtue* of which he entered. The apostle allows a *treble dissimilitude* between the type and the antitype; for Christ entered by his *own* blood, the high priest by the blood of calves and goats; Christ only *once*, the high priest every year; Christ entered into *heaven*, the high priest into the tabernacle made with hands. But in other things he confirms a *similitude* between them, particularly in the entrance of the high priest into the holy place by or with the blood of his sacrifice.

The *Socinian* notion of Christ's oblation, as consisting only in his "appearance in heaven" without flesh

or blood, as they speak, overthrows all typical relation between it and the sacrifices of old. Nay, on that supposition, they were suited rather to *deceive* the church; for the universal testimony of them all was, that atonement for sin, was to be *made by blood*, and no otherwise. But, according to these men, Christ offered not himself to God for the expiation of our sins, until he had neither flesh nor blood! They fully declare that, according to their notion, there was indeed *no manner of similitude* between the things compared, but rather that they were opposite. The ground of the apostle's comparison is, that they were *both by blood*; Christ by his *own* blood, the high priests by the blood of calves and goats; but, according to the sense of these men, herein consists the difference between them, that the one was *with blood*, and the other *without blood*, which is expressly to contradict the apostle.

What they observe of the sacrifices of old, that not the *bodies* of them, but only the *kidneys and fat* were burned, and the blood only carried into the holy place, is neither true nor any thing to their purpose, Lev. xvi, 27; xvii, 11. It doth not therefore thence follow, as is pretended, that the Lord Christ "offered not himself a sacrifice to God on the earth, but did so in *heaven* only;" but the direct contrary doth follow; for the blood of the sin offering was *offered on the altar*, before it was carried into the holy place; which was the type of Christ's entrance into heaven.

§2. The apostle's design in this verse is, to declare the *dignity* of the person of Christ in the discharge of his priestly office above the high priest of old. And this he doth—from the excellency of his sacrifice, which was his own blood; and—from the place, into which he entered by virtue of it, which was heaven it-

self; and finally—from the effect of it, in that by it he procured eternal redemption.

I shall open the words, not in the order wherein they lie in the text, but in the natural order of the things themselves.

3. (Εἰς τὰ ἁγία) *into the holies*; the same word by which he expresseth the second part of the tabernacle; but in the application of it to Christ the signification is changed. Here it signifies what the other typified, ver. 24; the place of the glorious residence of God's presence or majesty. "*He entered.*" This entrance of Christ into heaven upon his ascension may be considered—both as it was *regal*, glorious, and triumphant, and as it was *sacerdotal*. Peace and reconciliation being made by the blood of the cross, the covenant being confirmed, eternal redemption obtained, he entered as our High Priest into the holy place, the temple of God above, to make his sacrifice effectual to the church.

This he did (ἐφ' ἅπασι) *once only, once for all*; not once (or one day) every year, as the legal high priest; a full demonstration that his one sacrifice had fully expiated the sins of the church.

§4. Of this *entrance* it is said, that "*he did not do it by the blood of goats and calves;*" (οὐδὲ) *neither*; which refers to what was before denied of him, as to his "*entrance into the tabernacle made with hands.*"

This entrance is at large described, Lev. xvi. It was by the blood of *a bullock and a goat*, which the apostle here renders in the *plural* number, "*calves and goats;*" because of the *annual repetition* of the same sacrifice. The order of the institution was, that first the bullock or calf was offered, then the goat; the one for the priest, the other for the people. This or *er* belonging not at all to the apostle's purpose, he expresseth it—"goats and calves." The word (τράσος,) which

we render *goat*, expresseth (*totum genus caprinum*) that whole kind of creature, be it young or old; so the bullock the priest offered for himself was (*בֶּרֶךְ, מוֹסֵחַס*, *juvencus, ex genere bovino, genus vitulinum*) all young cattle. The high priest entered into the holy place (*δὲ ἀμωλοῦ*) by their blood, which he was to offer at the altar for a sin offering, Lev. xvi, 6, 11; and there alone atonement was to be for sin, Lev. xvii, 11. So far is it from truth, that expiation for sin was made only in the holy place; and that it is so by Christ without blood, as the *Socinians* imagine. He was to carry some of the blood of the sacrifice into the sanctuary to sprinkle it there to make atonement for the holy place, in the sense hereafter mentioned on ver. 23. He doth not declare *with what* the high priest entered into the holy place, for he entered with incense as well as with blood; but what it was by virtue of which he entered so as to be accepted with God. And so all things exactly correspond between the type and the antitype. For,

§5. It is affirmed of him that he entered (*διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου ἀμωλοῦ*) but by his own blood; by virtue of it when shed, when he offered himself to God, which laid the foundation of his priestly administration in heaven, and by which all the good things he effectually communicates to us by that administration were procured.

This exposition is the centre of all gospel mysteries, the object of angelic and human admiration to all eternity. What heart can conceive, what tongue can express the wisdom, grace, and love, that here unite their splendors! "God purchased the church with his own blood!" Acts xx, 28. How unquestionable, how immutably perfect must the atonement be that was thus made! how glorious the redemption that was thus procured!

§6. "Having obtained eternal redemption." The Greek word (*εὐχαμενος*) is variously rendered; but it is used, in all good authors, for not only *to find*, but to *obtain* by endeavors, see Rom. iv, 1; Heb. iv, 16. He *obtained effectually* eternal redemption by the price of his blood; and it is mentioned in a *tense* denoting the time *past*, to signify that he had obtained it *before* he entered into the holy place. All *redemption* respects a state of bondage and captivity; and both in the scripture, and in the common notion of the word, "redemption" is the deliverance of persons from a state of bondage; and this may be done—either by *power*;—or by *payment* of a price: the latter only is properly so called. The (*λυτρωσις*, from *λυτρον*) *redemption* that is by Christ, is every where said to be a *price*, a *ransom*, see Matt. xx, 28; Mark x, 45; 1 Cor. vi, 20; 1 Tim. ii, 6; 1 Pet. i, 18, 19. In short, it is the deliverance of persons out of a state of captivity and bondage by the payment of a valuable price or ransom. And the *Scinians* offer violence not only to the scripture, but to common sense itself, when they contend the redemption, which is constantly affirmed to be by a price, is metaphorical; and that only proper which is by power.

The *ransom* in this redemption is expressed two ways: by what gave it worth, that it might be a sufficient *ransom* for all, viz. The *person* of Christ, "He gave himself for us," Gal. ii, 20. "He gave himself a ransom for all, 1 Tim. ii, 6. "He offered himself to God," ver. 14; and—by the special nature of it, viz. *his own blood*, see Eph. i, 7; 1 Pet. i, 18, 19: and this *blood of Christ* was a ransom or price of redemption—partly from the invaluableness of that obedience which he yielded to God in the shedding of it, and—partly, because it was also to be an atonement, as offered to God in sacrifice. For it is by blood, and no otherwise,

is atonement made, Lev. xvii, 11; wherefore he is "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," Rom. iii, 24, 25.

That Christ gave himself a *ransom* for sin; that he did it in *shedding his blood* for us, wherein he made his soul an offering for sin; that hereby he made *atonement*, and expiated our sins; and that all these things belonged to our "*redemption*," is the SUBSTANCE OF THE GOSPEL. That this redemption is nothing but the expiation of sin, and that the expiation of sin is nothing but an act of power and authority in Christ now in heaven, as the *Socinians* dream, is to reject the whole gospel.

This redemption is said to be "*eternal*," on account of the *subject matter* of it, which are things eternal, and not carnal or temporal. It was not for a *season*, like that of the people out of Egypt, or the deliverances which they had afterwards under the judges, and on other occasions. They endured in their effects only for a season, and afterwards new troubles of the same kind overtook them. But this was "*eternal*" in all the *effects* of it, none that are partakers of it, do ever return into a state of bondage; so it endures in those *effects* to all eternity in heaven itself.

§7. (II.) And sundry things we may observe from this verse,

1. The entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven as our High Priest, to appear in the presence of God for us, and to save us to the uttermost, was a thing so great and glorious, as could not be accomplished but by his *own blood*; "not by the blood of bulls and goats." Men seldom rise in their thoughts to the *greatness* of this mystery; even the faith of the best is but weak and imperfect in comprehending the glory of it. Our relief is, that the uninterrupted con-

temptation of it will be a part of our eternal blessedness.

2. Whatever difficulty lay in the way of Christ to the work of redemption, he would not desist from his undertaking. He made his way into the holy place by his own blood.

3. There was an *holy place* meet to receive the Lord Christ after the sacrifice of himself; and a suitable reception for such a person, after so glorious a performance—the heaven of heavens, the glorious residence of the majesty of God.

4. If Christ entered not into the holy place until he had finished his work, we may not expect an entrance there until we have finished ours; he fainted not, nor waxed weary, until all was finished: and it is our duty to arm ourselves with the same mind.

5. It must be a glorious *effect* which had so glorious a cause—even eternal redemption!

VERSES 13, 14.

For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

§1. Preliminary remarks. §2—7. Concerning the ceremonial purification. §8. The several parts of the comparison stated. §9, 10. (I.) The blood of Christ. §11—14. (II.) The means whereby it became effectual. §15. (III.) Its effects upon the conscience. §16. (IV.) The consequent advantage. §17, 18. Observations.

§1. **T**HERE is in this and the following verse an *argument* and a *comparison*. If that which is less can do that which is less; then that which is greater can do that which is greater; provided also that *less*, in what it did was a type of what was greater, in that

greater thing which it was to effect. That which is to be confirmed, is, "That the Lord Jesus Christ by his blood hath obtained for us eternal redemption."

To make evident the force of his argument in general we must remark;

1. That what he had proved before, he takes here for granted, on the one side and the other; on the one side, that the Levitical services and ordinances were in themselves carnal, and had only an obscure representation of things spiritual and eternal; and, on the other side, that the tabernacle, office, and sacrifice of Christ, were spiritual, and had their effects in eternal things.

2. That those other carnal earthly things were divinely appointed types and resemblances of those which are spiritual and eternal.

From these suppositions the argument is firm, as the ordinances of old being carnal, had an efficacy to their *proper end* to purify the unclean as to the flesh; so the sacrifice of Christ hath a certain efficacy to its *proper end*—"the purging of our consciences from dead works." The force of the inference depends on the *relation* that was between them in the appointment of God. There was a *greater efficacy*, and that which gave a greater evidence of itself, in the sacrifice of Christ with respect to *its* proper end, than there was in those sacrifices with respect to *their* proper end; *how much more*; and the reason is, because all their efficacy depended on a mere arbitrary institution; having, in their own nature, neither worth nor efficacy; but in the sacrifice of Christ, who "offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit," there is an innate glorious worth and efficacy, which, suitably to the rules of eternal reason and righteousness, will accomplish and procure its effects.

§2. In the foregoing verse, he had respect only to the anniversary sacrifice of the high priest, but here he enlargeth the subject to the consideration of all other expiatory sacrifices under the law. For he joins to the "blood of bulls and goats," the *ashes of an heifer*, which was of no use in the anniversary sacrifice. And therefore the words in the close of the verse, expressing the ends and effects of these ordinances, "purified the unclean as to the flesh," are not to be restrained to them immediately foregoing, "the ashes of an heifer sprinkled;" but equally respect "the blood of bulls and goats." By *bulls and goats*, by an usual synecdoche, all the several kinds of clean beasts, whose blood was typically appointed to make atonement with, are intended, Lev. xvii, 11. *Purification* was also made by the *sprinkling* of it.

§3. The second thing mentioned to the same end is the "*ashes of an heifer*," and the use of them, which was by *sprinkling*. The institution, use, and end of this ordinance are described at large, Numb. xix, and an eminent type of Christ it was, both as to his *suffering*, and the continual *cleansing* virtue of his blood in the church.

It was to be a *red heifer*, without spot or blemish, whereon no yoke had come, Numb. xix, 2; *red* is the color of *guilt*, Isa. i, 18; yet was there no spot or blemish in the heifer, so was the guilt of sin upon Christ, who, in himself, was absolutely pure and holy. No yoke had been on her, nor was there any *constraint* on Christ, but he offered himself willingly through the eternal Spirit.

The blood of the slain heifer was sprinkled by the priest seven times directly before the tabernacle of the congregation, ver. 4. so is the whole church purified by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ.

The whole heifer was to be burned in the sight of the priest, ver. 5. so was Christ, soul and body, offered up to God in the fire of love, kindled in him by the eternal Spirit.

§4. The nature and use of this ordinance is farther described by its object, (*κεκοινωµενος*) *the unclean*; those that were *made common*. All those who had a liberty of approach to God in his solemn worship, were so far *sanctified*, that is, separated, and dedicated. And such as were deprived of this privilege were made *common*, and so *unclean*.

The unclean especially intended in the institution, were those who were defiled by the dead. Every one that, by any means, *touched a dead body*, whether dying naturally or slain, whether in the house or field, was defiled; no such person was to come into the congregation, or near the tabernacle. And this was to represent to the people the curse of the law, whereof death was the great visible effect. The present Jews have this notion, "that defilement by the dead arose from the poison that is dropt into them that die by the angel of death." The meaning of it is, that death came in by sin, from the poisonous temptation of the old serpent, and befel men by the curse, which of consequence took hold of them; but they have lost the understanding of their own tradition.

§5. The manner of applying this purified water was by *sprinkling*. "Sprinkling the unclean;" not only the act, but the *efficacy* of it is intended. See Numb. xix, 17, 18. The *ashes* were kept by themselves; where use was to be made of them, they were to be mingled with clean water from the spring. The virtue was from the *ashes* of the heifer, slain and burnt as a *sin offering*. The water was used as the means of application; being so mingled, any clean person (for it was not con-

fined to the priests) might dip a bunch of hyssop (see Psal. li, 7) into it, and sprinkle any thing or person that was defiled. And this rite of *sprinkling* was that alone in all sacrifices, by which their continual efficacy for sanctification and purification, was expressed; thence is the blood of Christ called "the blood of sprinkling," because of its efficacy for our sanctification, as applied by faith to our souls and consciences.

§6. The effect of the things mentioned is, that they "sanctified to the purifying of the flesh;" namely, that those to whom they were applied, might be made Levitically clean, be so freed from their carnal defilements, as to have an admission to the solemn worship of God and society of the church.

"*Sanctifieth.*" Every defiled person was made common, excluded from the privilege of a right to draw nigh to God in his solemn worship; but in his *purification* he was again separated to the Lord, and restored to his sacred right.

The word is of the singular number, and is distinctly to be referred by a *Zeugma* both to the "ashes of an heifer," and "the blood of bulls and goats." The *whole effect* of all the sacrifices and institutions of the law is comprised in this word (*ᾠγιαζεῖ*) *sanctifieth*.

They sanctified to the "purifying of the flesh." The *legally defiled*, who were excluded from divine worship, and made obnoxious to the curse of the law, were so *legally purified*, justified, and cleansed by them, as that they had free admission into their forfeited privileges. This they were *able to effect*, this they did, by virtue of divine institution—but nothing more.

§7. Why then, it will be said, did God appoint them? Why did he oblige the people to their observance? I answer, it was not on account of their outward use and efficacy, as to the purifying of the flesh, which, as it

was *alone*, God always despised; but because of their appointed "representation of good things to come." In that respect they were glorious, and exceedingly advantageous to the faith and obedience of the church. For although the rites and sacrifices of the law, by their own virtue, purified only externally, and delivered only from temporary punishments, yet the precepts and promises of the law required the *same holiness* and obedience as doth the gospel.

§8. "How much more shall the blood of Christ," &c.
—This verse contains,

1. The subject treated of, in opposition to that before spoken to, "the blood of Christ."

2. The means whereby this blood of Christ was effectual, in opposition to the efficacy of legal ordinances; "He offered himself" (that is, in the shedding of it) "to God without spot, through the eternal Spirit."

3. The intended effect wrought by it, in opposition to the end and effect of legal ordinances; to "purge our consciences from dead works."

4. The benefit we receive thereby, in opposition to that which was obtained by the legal administrations; "that we may serve the living God."

§9. (I.) "*How much more* shall the blood of Christ." The force of the argument is not merely, as before hinted, (§1,) a *comparatis*, and a *minori*; but from the nature of the things themselves, as the one was appointed to be *typical* of the other. For there is a greater reason in the nature of things, that the "blood of Christ should purge our consciences from dead works," than there is, that the "blood of bulls and goats should sanctify to the purifying of the flesh." The sacrifice of Christ, as to its original, depended on the sovereign pleasure, wisdom, and grace of God; but, being so appointed, it had, on account of the *infinite*

dignity of his person, and the nature of his oblation, a real efficacy with respect to the justice and wisdom of God, to procure the effect mentioned by way of purchase and merit. That the offering was *himself*, that he "offered himself through the eternal Spirit" in his divine person, is what gives assurance of the effect mentioned, above any grounds we have to believe, "that the blood of bulls and goats should sanctify to the purifying of the flesh."—"The blood of Christ." For on his being the *Messiah* depends the principal force of the present argument. It is the *blood* of Him who was promised of old to be the high priest of the church, and the sacrifice for their sins: in whom was the faith of all the saints of old, that by him their sins should be expiated.

§10. "The *blood* of Christ," when, as here, redemption is ascribed to it, does not intend *only that material blood* which he shed, absolutely considered; but that *as it was the pledge and sign* of all the internal obedience and sufferings of Christ's person. "He became obedient unto death, the death of the cross," whereon his blood was shed. This was the great instance of his obedience, and of his sufferings, whereby he made reconciliation and atonement for sin. Hence the effects of all his sufferings, and of all obedience in his sufferings, are ascribed to his *blood*. Wherefore this expression, "the blood of Christ," in order to our redemption, or the expiation of sin, is comprehensive of *all he did and suffered* for those ends, inasmuch as the shedding of it was the way and means whereby he offered himself to God.

§11. (II.) The second thing is the means whereby the blood of Christ came to be of that efficacy which is ascribed to it; "he offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit, without spot."

"He offered himself." The whole human nature was the offering, and the way he offered it was by the shedding of his blood. So the *beast* was the *sacrifice*, when the *blood* alone, or principally, was *offered* on the altar. It was the blood that made atonement; so it was *by his blood* that Christ made atonement, but it was his *person* that gave it efficacy to that end. Wherefore by *"himself,"* the whole human nature of Christ is intended; and this *"offering"* of himself was the act of his whole person; both natures concurred in the offering, though one alone was offered. His *obedience* in suffering was that which rendered his offering a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor to God.

And he is said thus to *"offer himself"* in opposition to the sacrifices of the high priest under the law. They offered goats and bulls, or their blood; but he offered *himself*. This therefore was the nature of the offering of Christ: "It was a sacred act of the Lord Christ, as the high priest of the church, wherein—according to the will of God, and what was required of him by virtue of the eternal compact between the Father and him, concerning the redemption of the church—he gave up himself in the way of most profound obedience, to do and suffer whatever the justice and law of God required for the expiation of sin, *expressing the whole by the shedding of his blood*, in answer to all the typical representations of his sacrifice in all the institutions of the law." A proper sacrifice consisted, as to its *nature*, in the sacred giving up to God what was offered in the present *destruction* or *consumption* of it; and thus is Christ's offering of himself to God a *proper sacrifice*, for there was in it an effusion of his blood, and the destruction of his life.

§12. "Offered himself to God." A sacrifice is the highest and chief act of sacred worship; especially it

must be so, when one offereth himself according to the will of God. God is the proper object of all religion worship, to whom, *as such* alone, any sacrifice may be offered. To offer sacrifice to any other is the highest idolatry: but an offering, an expiatory sacrifice for sin is made to God, *as God*, under a peculiar notion of consideration, as the author of the law against which sin is committed, as the supreme ruler and governor of all, to whom it belongs to inflict the punishment which is due to sin. For the end of such sacrifices is to avert displeasure and punishment by making atonement. With respect to this, therefore, the divine nature is considered, as peculiarly subsisting in the person of the Father. For so is he constantly represented to our faith as the judge of all, Heb. xii, 23. With him, *as such*, the Lord Christ had to do in the offering of himself, chap. v, ver. 7. But here it may be asked, If Christ was God himself, how could he offer himself to God? I answer: If there were *one nature only* in the person of Christ, it may be this might seem impertinent: and yet there may be cases wherein the same individual person, under several capacities, as of a good man on the one hand, and a ruler or judge on the other, may, for the benefit of the public, and the preservation of the laws of the community, both give and take satisfaction himself. But whereas in the one person of Christ there are two natures so infinitely distinct, both acting under such distinct capacities, there is nothing unbecoming this mystery that the one of them might be offered to the other.

But it is not the *same person* that offereth the sacrifice, and to whom it is offered: for it is, the person of the Father, or the *divine nature* considered as acting itself in the person of the Father, to *whom* the offering was made. And although the person of the Son is

partaker of the same nature with the Father, yet that nature is not the object of this divine worship as in him, but as in the person of the Father. Wherefore the Son did not formally offer *himself to himself*, but to God, as exercising supreme rule, government, and judgment, in the person of the Father.

As these things are plainly and fully testified to in the scripture, so the way to come to a blessed satisfaction in them, is not to consult the cavils of carnal wisdom, but to pray "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give to us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of our understandings being enlightened, we may come to the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

§13. "He offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit;" (*διὰ*) *through*, *by*, denotes a concurrent operation, when one works with another. The eternal Spirit was not an inferior instrument whereby Christ offered himself, but rather the principal efficient cause.

The variety that is in the reading of this place, is taken notice of by all. Some copies read by the *eternal* Spirit, some by the *holy* Spirit. I shall not positively determine on either of these senses to the exclusion of the other; but I must acknowledge that there are two considerations, which peculiarly recommend the former interpretation.

1. The most numerous and the most ancient copies read by the "*eternal* Spirit;" and they are followed by the *Syriac*, with all the *Greek scholiasts*. Now although the *holy* Spirit be also an *eternal* Spirit, in the unity of the same divine nature with the Father and the Son; yet, where he is spoken of with respect to his

own *personal* actings, he is constantly called the *holy Spirit*, and not the *eternal Spirit*. Again:

2. The design of the apostle is to prove the superior *efficacy* of the offering of Christ, above those of the priests under the law. Now this arose, partly, that he offered *himself*, whereas they only offered the blood of bulls and goats; but principally, from the *dignity* of his *person* in his offering, in that he offered *himself* by his "*own eternal Spirit*," or divine nature. But I shall leave the reader to judge of the scope of the place, either sense being suitable to the analogy of faith.

This is the *second* thing wherein the apostle opposeth the offering of Christ to the offerings of the priests under the law. *They* offered bulls and goats; *he* offered himself. *They* offered by a material altar and fire, *he* by the *eternal Spirit*.

That Christ should thus offer *himself* to God, and that by the *eternal Spirit*, is the centre of the gospel mystery. And an attempt to corrupt, or to pervert this glorious truth, is a design against the glory of God and the faith of the church. The depth of this mystery we cannot dive into it, the height of it we cannot comprehend; we cannot search out the greatness of its wisdom, love, and grace. And those who choose rather to reject, than to live by faith in an humble admiration of it, do so at the peril of their souls. To the reason of *some* men it may appear *foolish*, to *faith* it is full of glory. In the consideration of the divine actings of the *eternal Spirit* of Christ in the offering of himself; of the holy exercise of all grace in the human nature offered; of the nature, dignity and efficacy of this sacrifice, faith finds life, food, and refreshment. Herein doth it contemplate the *wisdom*, the *righteousness*, the *holiness* and *grace* of God; herein doth it view the

wonderful condescension and love of Christ, and from the whole is strengthened and encouraged.

§14. It is added—"without spot." This adjunct is descriptive, not of the priest, but of the sacrifice; it is not a qualification of his person, but of the offering.

The *allusion* to the legal institutions is evident. The Lamb that was to be slain and offered was antecedently without blemish; hence the apostle Peter affirms, that "we were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. i, 18. And Christ is not only called "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," John i, 29; that is, by being slain and offered; but is represented in the *worship* of the church as a lamb slain, Rev. v, 6.

Wherefore this expression, "without spot," respects, in the first place, the purity of his *nature* and the holiness of his *life*; for although this principally belonged to the necessary qualifications of his person, yet were they required in him as a sacrifice. There was nothing in him, nothing wanting to him, that should any way hinder his sacrifice from being divinely accepted and really *expiatory* of sin. And thus was the church instructed to expect by all those legal institutions.

§15. (III.) The *effect* of the blood of Christ through the offering of himself is the "purging of our consciences from dead works."

The word is in the future tense (*καθαρισει*) "*shall purge*." The blood of Christ as offered hath a double respect and effect:—towards God in making atonement for sin; and—towards the *consciences* of men, in the application of its virtue to them, which is here intended; and this is expressed *as future* to declare the *certainty* of the event, or the *infallible connexion* of these things, the blood of Christ, and the purging of

the conscience, in all that betake themselves to it; it *shall* do it effectually and infallibly. The apostle respects the generality of the Hebrews, whether already professing the gospel or now invited to it; and he proposeth this to them as the *advantage* they should be made partakers of by relinquishing the Mosaical ceremonies and betaking themselves to the faith of the gospel: for whereas before, by the best of legal ordinances, they attained no more than an outward sanctification as to the *flesh*, they shall now have their *conscience* infallibly purged from dead works.

By "dead works," *sins*, as to their guilt and defilement, are confessedly intended; so called, because they proceed from a principle of spiritual death,—because they are useless and fruitless, as all dead things are—and because they deserve death, and tend to it. There seems to be a peculiar *allusion* to dead bodies, and legal defilement by them; for he hath respect to purification by the *ashes of the heifer*, and this respected principally uncleanness by the *dead*. As men were purified by the sprinkling of the ashes of an heifer mingled with living water, from defilements contracted from the dead, without which they were separated from God and the church; so, unless men are really purged from their moral defilements by the blood of Christ, they must perish for ever. Now this defilement from the dead arose from hence, that death was the effect of the curse of the law; wherefore the *guilt of sin*, with respect to the curse of the law, is here primarily intended, and consequently its *pollution*. "The *conscience*." He doth not say, your souls, your minds, or your persons, but your *conscience*. Under the law it was the body that was defiled, and it was the body that was purified; those ordinances sanctified only to "the purifying of the flesh;" but the defile-

ments here intended are spiritual, relating to the *conscience*, and therefore such is the purification also.

He mentions the respect of these dead works to "conscience" in particular, because that is concerned in peace with God, and confidence of approach to him. Sin variously effects all the faculties of the soul, and there is in it a peculiar defilement of conscience, Tit. i, 15; whereby is introduced a sense of guilt. This brings along with it fear and dread, whence the sinner dares not approach the presence of God. Wherefore the "purging of conscience from dead works" primarily respects the *guilt* of sin, and the virtue of the blood of Christ in its removal; but there is also an inherent *defilement* of conscience as of all other faculties of the soul. Yet we should remark conscience is here used *synedochically* for the whole soul and all its faculties; yea, for our whole *souls and bodies*, which are all to be cleansed and sanctified, 1 Thes. v, 23. To purge our "conscience" is to purge us in our *whole persons*.

§16. (IV.) The last thing is, the consequent advantage we hereby receive. "To serve the living God." The words should be rendered "that we may serve;" that is, have right and liberty to do so, being no longer excluded from the privilege, as persons were under the law whilst unclean. "The living God." *Absolutely*, he alone hath life in himself, and is the only author and cause of life to all others; *comparatively*, with respect to idols and false gods, which are dead things, such as have neither life nor operation. So called, to beget *faith* and trust in him, as the author of temporal, spiritual, and eternal *life*, 1 Tim. i, 10; to beget a due *fear* and reverence of him, as he who lives and sees, who hath all life in his power; so it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And.

this epistle being written principally to warn the Hebrews of the danger of *unbelief* and apostasy from the gospel, the apostle in several places makes mention of God, with whom they had to do, under this title, chap. iii, 12; x, 31; but there is something peculiar in the mention of it in this place; for the due consideration of God as the *living God*, will discover how necessary it is that we be purged from dead works to serve him in a due manner. The nature of gospel worship and service is intimated to be such as peculiarly becomes the "*living God*."

What is it to "*serve the living God*?" I doubt not but that the whole life of faith, in universal obedience, is consequentially required. Not any one duty can be performed as it ought without the antecedent purging of our consciences from dead works; but yet sacred and *solemn worship* primarily is intended: for as we therein express and testify the subjection of our souls and consciences to him, and solemnly engage in universal obedience, (for of these things all acts of outward worship are the solemn pledges) so in that eminently doth God testify his acceptance of us, and delight in us, by Jesus Christ.

What is *required on our part*? It is included in the expression (*εις το λατρευειν*) "*that we may serve*." And two things are implied—*liberty* and *ability*; the one includes right and boldness; the other respects all the supplies of the Holy Spirit in grace and gifts: both these we receive by the blood of Christ, that we may be meet and able in a due manner to serve the living God.

§17. And from the words thus explained we may observe:

1. There is such an evidence of wisdom and righteousness, to a spiritual eye, in the whole mystery of

our redemption, sanctification, and salvation by Christ, as gives an immoveable foundation to faith to rest upon. It is *unbelief* alone, made obstinate by prejudices insinuated by the devil, that hides these things from any, 2 Cor. iv, 3, 4.

2. The efficacy of all the offices of Christ towards the church depends on the *dignity* of his person. The offering of his blood was prevalent for the expiation of sin, because it was *HIS* blood, and for no other reason. The *person* of Christ is the principle of all his mediatory acts, although those acts be immediately performed by virtue of his distinct natures, some of one, some of another, according to their distinct properties and powers; wherefore he was so far a mediator and priest in *both* his natures, as that whatever he did in the discharge of those offices was the act of his *entire person*, whereon the dignity and efficacy of all he did depended.

3. There is nothing more destructive to the whole faith of the gospel than by any means to evacuate the immediate efficacy of the blood of Christ; every opinion of that tendency breaks in upon the whole mystery of the wisdom and grace of God in him: it renders all the institutions and sacrifices of the law, whereby God instructed the church of old in the mystery of his grace, useless and unintelligible, and overthrows the foundation of the gospel.

4. This was the greatest expression of the inexpressible love of Christ; "he offered himself;" this is the foundation of our faith and boldness in approaching to God, that Christ hath *offered himself* for us.

It is hence evident how vain and insufficient are all other ways for the expiation of sin, and the purging of our consciences before God. The sum of all false religion consisted always in contrivances for the expi-

ation of sin; and as superstition is restless, so the inventions of men have been endless in finding out means to this end: but if any thing within the power of men to invent or accomplish had been sufficient for this purpose, there would have been no need that the Son of God should have offered himself, see chap. x, 5—8; Micah vi, 8, 9.

§18. We may farther observe the following particulars:

1. Faith has a ground of *triumph* in the certain efficacy of the blood of Christ for the expiation of sin. "How much more." The Holy Ghost here and elsewhere teacheth faith to argue itself into a *full assurance*. The reasonings he proposeth and insisteth on to this end are admirable, Rom. viii, 31—39. How heavenly, how divine, is that way of arguing to this purpose which our blessed Savior proposeth to us in the parable of the unjust judge and the widow! Luke xviii, 1—3. And in that other, of the man and his friend that come to seek bread by night! chap. xi, 5—7. Who can read them, but his soul is surprised into some kind of confidence of being heard in his supplication, if in any measure compliant with the rule prescribed? And the apostle's argument here leaves no room for doubt or objection. Were we more diligent in the exercise of faith, by arguings and expostulations upon scripture principles, we should be more firm in our assent to the conclusions which arise from them, and be enabled more to triumph against the assaults of unbelief.

2. Nothing could expiate sin, and free conscience from dead works, but the *blood of Christ* alone, and that in the offering of it to God through the eternal Spirit. The redemption of the souls of men is precious, and must have ceased for ever, had not infinite

Wisdom found out this way for its accomplishment. The work was too great for any other to undertake, or for any other means to effect; and the glory of God therein is hid only to them that perish.

3. It was to God, as the supreme ruler and law-giver, atonement for sin was to be made; "he offered himself to God." It was HE, whose law was violated, whose justice was provoked, to whom it belonged to require and receive satisfaction. And who was meet to tender it to him, but the man that was his fellow, who gave efficacy to his oblation by the dignity of his person? In the contemplation of the glory of God in this matter does the life of faith principally consist.

4. The souls and consciences of men are wholly *polluted*, before they are purged by the blood of Christ. And this pollution is such, as excludes them (in a sense) from all right of access to God in his worship, as it was with them who were legally unclean.

5. Even the best works of men, antecedently to the purging of their consciences by the blood of Christ, are but *dead works*. However men may please themselves in them, perhaps think to *merit* by them, yet from death they come, and to death they tend.

6. Justification and sanctification are inseparably conjoined in the design of God's grace by the blood of Christ. "Purge our consciences that we may serve the living God."

7. Gospel worship is such in its spirituality and holiness as becometh the *living God*; and our duty it is always to consider, that with him we have to do.

VERSE 15.

And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, the by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

§1. Concerning the meaning of the word Testament. §2 The connexion of argument. §3. First, God designed for some an eternal inheritance. §4. Secondly, by what way. §5. Thirdly, to whom. §6. Fourthly, an obstacle removed. §7. Fifthly, by what means. §8. Sixthly, its Mediator. §9. Seventhly, his death. §11, 12. Observations.

§1. **AN** inquiry may be justly moved, why we render the Greek word (*διαθηκη*) by a *testament* in this place, whereas before we have constantly rendered by it a *covenant*? And the plain reason is, because from this verse to the end of the chapter the apostle argues from the nature and use of a "testament" among men, as he directly affirms in the next verse. This word (*διαθηκη*) is properly a "*testamentary disposition of things*;" as another Greek word (*συνθηκη*) is properly a *covenant*. For in the composition of the word there is nothing to intimate a *mutual compact*, which is necessary to a covenant strictly so called. However there is a great affinity in the things themselves; for there are *covenants* which have in them *grants* and *donations*; and there are *testaments* whose force is resolved into some *conditions* and *agreements*. Such is their affinity, that one name may be expressive of them both.

The Hebrew word (*ברית*) could not be more properly rendered by any one word than by that which the apostle useth; for it being mostly used to express the covenant between God and man, it is of that nature as cannot properly be termed (*συνθηκη*) a *covenant*, or compact, upon equal terms of *distributive justice*.

between distinct parties. But God's covenant with man is only the way, and the declaration of the *terms*, whereby God will *dispose and communicate* good things to us, which had more of the nature of a testament than of a covenant. Besides, the Hebrew term is often used to express a *free promise*, with an effectual donation and communication of the thing promised; but this hath more the nature of a testament than of a covenant; again, there is no word in the Hebrew language whereby to express a *testament* but that only; and therefore where the nature of the thing spoken of requires it, it is properly rendered "a testament." Wherefore the apostle having discoursed before concerning the covenant as it prescribed and required obedience, with promises and penalties annexed; he now treats of it as to the *donation and communication* of good things, with the grant of them confirmed by death; in which sense it was a testament and not a covenant properly so called. And the apostle's argument from this word is not only just and reasonable; but, without it we could never have rightly understood the typical representation made of the death, blood, and sacrifice of Christ, in confirming the New Testament, as we shall see immediately.

This difficulty being removed, we may proceed in the exposition of the words.

§2. "And for this cause" (*καὶ*) *and*, is emphatically expletive, denoting a progress in the present argument; as much as, *also, moreover*. "For this cause;" it is evident that here is a *reason* rendered of the *necessity* of Christ's death and sacrifice, by which alone our consciences may be purged from dead works; for it is the nature of his office to be the Mediator of the new covenant, which, being a testament, required the *death of the Testator*; and moreover the *redemption* of trans-

gressions, and the purchase of an eternal inheritance, were to be effected by his *death and sacrifice*.

For the exposition of the mind of the Holy Ghost, and nature of these sublime truths, we must leave the order of the words, and take that of the things themselves.

§3. *First*, God designed for some (ἐν αὐτῷ; ἀπορροια) an *eternal inheritance*. It is altogether vain to seek for any other cause of preparing this inheritance, and of its designation to any person, but his own grace, and sovereign pleasure; and therefore it is called an "inheritance," to mind us that the way whereby we come to it is *gratuitous adoption*, and not purchase or merit. It is called "*eternal*," in opposition to the inheritance, which by virtue of the first testament, God granted to the Israelites in the land of Canaan. That which is *principally* intended by it is, that state of things whereinto believers are admitted in this life. The whole inheritance of grace and glory was in the first place given and committed to Jesus Christ. He was "appointed heir of all things," chap. i, 3; by him is it communicated to all believers, who thereby become "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii, 15—17. For the Lord Christ, as the great testator, did, by his death, *bequeath* to them all his good things as an *eternal legacy*. And a wonderful inheritance it is! The lines are fallen to believers in pleasant places! And the way whereby we become interested in the unparalleled blessing is by *gratuitous adoption*. "If sons, then heirs."

§4. *Secondly*, the way whereby God would communicate this inheritance to any was by *promise*; "might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance." The inheritance of Canaan was by (and in subservience

cy to) the *law*, or *first covenant*; but this was by *promise*.

The "*promise*" principally intended is that which was given to Abraham, and confirmed by the oath of God; for the eternal inheritance was continued in that precious promise, Gal. iii, 18, "that in the seed of Abraham all nations should be blessed." It includes indeed the *first promise* made to our first parents, which was the *spring* and *foundation* of it; and respects all the following promises concerning the Lord Christ and the benefits of his mediation. But that great solemn promise is *principally* intended; for the apostle designs to convince the Hebrews that neither by the law, nor the sacrifices and ordinances of it, could they come to the inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed; which, as we said before, was the promise of eternal inheritance, whereof that of the land of *Canaan* was only a type.

The *promise* is every where opposed to *works* or desert in ourselves; it hath no respect to what we *were*, or did *deserve*. Hence the suitableness of obtaining it by *faith*; "and it is of *faith* that it may be of *grace*;" Rom. iv, 16: namely, that it may be evidenced to be of the mere grace of God in opposition to all worth, works, and endeavors of our own. And if all grace and glory, all benefits of Christ's mediation, our sanctification, justification, and glorification, be an inheritance prepared in *grace*, conveyed by *promise*, and received by *faith*, there is no place left for meritorious works; freely it was *provided*, freely it is *proposed*, and freely it is *received*.

§5. *Thirdly*, the persons for whom this inheritance is designed, and who receive the promise of it, are "those that are called." It is to no purpose here to discourse about outward and inward calling, effectual

and ineffectual, complied with or not. No other are intended but those who actually "receive the promise." They are "the *called* according to his *purpose*," Rom. viii, 28: being predestinated "according to the purpose of him who worketh all things," Eph. i, 11: whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified, or gave them the *whole eternal inheritance*, Rom. viii, 30. It is not a *general call*, wherein those who are so called may or may not receive the inheritance; but they are *so called* as that they shall assuredly be made *partakers* of it.

§6. *Fourthly*, things being thus prepared in the counsel and grace of God, yet there was an *obstacle* in the way of actually receiving the promise—"the *transgressions* that were under the first testament." God designed to the elect an eternal inheritance; yet can they not be made partakers of it, but in such a way as was suited to his glory. It was unjust and unseasonable, that it should be otherwise; whereas therefore they were all guilty of sin, their sins must be expiated, and taken out of the way, or they cannot receive the promise of the inheritance. "Sins under the first covenant," are all sins whatever; for there is no sin committed under the gospel, but it is a sin against that law which requires us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and all our strength. The sacrifices of the law could not expiate *any sin*, could not purge the conscience from dead works; they made nothing perfect. This he speaks of *every sin* wherein the conscience of a sinner is concerned, chap. x, 2; Heb. x, 4: they typified and represented the expiation of all sorts of sins whatever; and made application of it to their souls. For if there was no *atonement* for their sins, if their consciences were not *purged* from

dead works, nor themselves *consummated*, but only had some outward purification of the flesh, it cannot be but they must all eternally perish. But that this was not their condition the apostle proves from hence, because they were called of God to an *eternal inheritance*, as he had proved at large concerning Abraham, chap. vi. Hence he infers the *necessity* of the mediation and death of Christ, as without the virtue of which all the called under the first covenant must perish eternally, there being no other way to come to the inheritance.

§7. *Fifthly*, the way that God took, and the means he used, for the removal of that hindrance, and the effectual accomplishment of his design, was the making of a *new testament*. He had fully proved before, that this could not be done by that covenant against which the sins were committed, neither by the priests, nor sacrifices, nor any other duties of it. Therefore had he promised the *abolition* of it, because of its *weakness* and insufficiency to this end, as also the introduction of a *new* to supply its defects. For it became the wisdom, goodness, and grace of God, upon the removal of the one for its insufficiency, to establish another that should be every way effectual to his purpose—the communication of an eternal inheritance to them that are called. Hence,

§8. *Sixthly*, it had a *mediator*; the Lord Christ, the Son of God. The dignity of his person, and, of consequence, the excellency and efficacy of his priestly office (which alone is here respected in his being called a Mediator) he had abundantly before demonstrated; and the sole end which in this place he assigns to his mediatory office, is his *death*; “that by means of death.” Whereas therefore there were sins committed under the first covenant, and against it, which it was

not able so to take away as that "the called" might receive the inheritance, the Lord Christ undertook to be the Mediator of that covenant, which was provided as a remedy against these evils. And the *mediation* of Christ here intended, is that whereby, "*suffering death in our stead,*" he made atonement for sin.

But moreover, God would not only *free* them that are called from that *death* which they deserved by their sins against the first covenant, but gave them also a *right* and title to an *eternal inheritance*. The first covenant of works was broken and disannulled, because it had no mediator. The covenant at Sinai had no such mediator as could expiate sin. Hence, both of them became the means of death and condemnation. God saw that in the making of the new covenant, it was necessary to put all things into the hands of a *mediator*, that it also might not be frustrated. And this mediator was, in the first place, to deliver us from the guilt of breaking the former, and the annexed curse, and then to *preserve* us in it. Glorious effect of infinite Wisdom!

§9. *Seventhly*, the special way and means whereby this effect was wrought by the Mediator, was *by death*. That which in the foregoing verse is ascribed to the *blood* of Christ, which he offered as a priest, is here ascribed to his *death*, as a Mediator. For both these really are the same; only in the one, the *thing itself* is expressed, "death," in the other the *manner* of it, "by blood."

It was therefore necessary to the end mentioned, that the Mediator of the new testament should *die*; he was to die that death which was threatened to transgressors against the first covenant; that is, death under the curse of the law.

§10. *Eighthly*, the death of the Mediator of the new testament, was “for the *redemption* of transgressions;” which is the deliverance of the transgressors from all the evils they were subjected to on their account, by the payment of a *satisfactory price*. The words used to express it, (λυτρον, αντιλυτρον, λυτρωσις, απολυτρωσις, λυτρωσθαι,) will admit of no other signification. Here it must answer the purging of conscience by the blood of Christ; and he calls his life a *ransom*, or price of redemption, which utterly destroys the foundation of the *Socinian* redemption and expiation for sin; for they make it only a freedom from punishment by an act of power; which is to reject the whole mystery of the gospel.

§11. We observe from the words thus explained,

1. It is an act of mere sovereign grace in God to provide such a blessed inheritance for any who had sinfully cast away what they were before entrusted with; and into this are all God’s dealings with the church progressively to be resolved. If there were nothing in us, to move God to *provide* this inheritance for us, no more is there for the *communication* of any part to us.

2. All our interest in the gospel inheritance depends on our “*receiving* the promise *by faith*;” though it be prepared in the counsel of God, though it be proposed to us in the dispensation of the gospel, yet, unless we receive the promise of it by faith, we have no saving, possessive right to it.

3. The conveyance and actual communication of the eternal inheritance by promise to be received by faith alone, tends exceedingly to the exaltation of God’s glory, and the security of salvation to believers; for it depends absolutely on the veracity of God, confirmed by his oath. And faith, on the other hand, is

the only way of ascribing to God the glory of all his holy properties of his nature.

4. Effectual vocation is the only way of entrance into the eternal inheritance; for it is accompanied with adoption, which gives us right and title to it, John 12: in vain do they expect it who are not so called.

5. Though God will give grace and glory to his elect, yet he will do it in such a way, as by which he may be glorified. Satisfaction must be made for transgression, to the honor of his righteousness, holiness, and law.

6. Such is the malignant nature of sin, of all transgressions of the law, that unless it be removed, no person can enjoy the promise of the eternal inheritance.

7. It was the work of God alone, the effect of infinite wisdom and grace, to provide a way for the removal of sin, that it might not be an everlasting obstacle against the communication of an eternal inheritance to them that are called.

§12. To these observations we may add the following;

1. A *new testament* providing an eternal inheritance in sovereign grace; the constituting of a *mediator* such a mediator, for that testament, in infinite wisdom and love; the *death* of that testator for the redemption of transgressions, to fulfil the law and satisfy divine justice, with the *communication* of that inheritance by promise to be received by faith—are the substance of the gospel mystery, and are with wonderful wisdom comprised by the apostle in these words.

2. That the efficacy of the mediation and death of Christ extended itself to all the called under the old testament, is an evident demonstration of his pre-existent divine nature, and the eternal covenant between the Father and him about them.

3. This first covenant did only forbid and condemn transgressions; *redemption* from them is by the new testament alone.

4. The glory and efficacy of the new covenant, and the assurance of the communication of an eternal inheritance by virtue of it, depend on its being made a testament by the *death* of the Mediator.

VERSES 16, 17.

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all, whilst the testator liveth.

§1. The force of the apostle's argument. §2, 3. The difference between a testament and a covenant. §4, 5. The necessity of Christ's death as a testator. §6. Wherein agree the Christian testament and those of men. §7. Wherein they differ. §8. Observations.

§1. **T**HERE is not much more to be considered in these verses than how the observation contained in them proves the *necessity and use* of the *death of Christ*, from the nature, ends, and use of the covenant of which he was the mediator; for being a "*testament*," it was to be confirmed with the death of the testator, from the very notion of a testament, and the only use of it amongst men. A testament is a just determination of a man's will concerning what he will have done with his goods after his decease, or it is the will of him who is dead. Take this power from men, and you root up the whole foundation of all industry and diligence in the world; for what man will labor to increase his substance, if when he dies he may not dispose of it to those for whom by nature, affinity, or other obligations, he hath most respect?

Of the like nature is his observation, that "a testament is of no force whilst the testator liveth;" for by

what way soever a man disposeth of his goods (by sale, by gift, &c.) so as that it shall take effect while he is alive, it is not a "testament," for *that* is only to will of a man concerning his goods when he is dead.

§2. To the confirmation or ratification of a "testament," that it may be (βεβαια) *sure*, stable, and of force there must be *death*, the death of the *testator*; but there is no need that this should be by *blood*, the blood of the testator or any other. To the consideration of a "covenant" blood was required, the blood of the sacrifice, and death only consequentially; but there was no need that it should be the blood or death of him that made the covenant: wherefore the apostle—declaring the necessity of the death of Christ, both as to the *nature* of it, that it was *really* death, and as to the *manner* of it, that it was by the effusion of his *blood*—evinced that *necessity* from the consideration of the *two covenants*, the old and the new testament: and especially from what was *essential* to a covenant as such, and in a testament precisely so called. What is essential to a *testament* is, that it be confirmed and made irrevocable by the *death* of the testator; and the excellency of a solemn religious *covenant*, whereby it is made firm and stable, is, that it be confirmed by the blood of sacrifices; as ver. 18—22: wherefore, whatever is excellent in either of these, was to be found in the *Mediator of the new testament*. Take it as a *testament*, in which he has bequeathed to the heirs of promise, grace and glory, and he *died* as the testator, where by the grant of the inheritance was made irrevocable. Take it as a *covenant*, as containing promises and prescribed obedience, and it was to be confirmed with the blood of the sacrifice of himself, which is the eminent solemn confirmation of this covenant. And as *his* death had an eminency above the death required

to a *testament*, in that it was *by blood*, and the sacrifice of *himself*; so had it an eminency above all the ways of confirming either the old covenant or any other solemn covenant whatever; in that it was confirmed with the blood of him that made it.

§3. This consideration solves all the seeming difficulties in the apostle's argument. The word (ברית) here referred to is, as we have shewed, of a large signification and various use; and is frequently taken for a *free grant* of things by promise, which hath the nature of a testament. And in the *old* covenant, there was a free grant and donation of the inheritance of the land of Canaan to the people, which belongs to the nature of a testament also; moreover, both of them, a covenant and a testament, agree in the *general* nature of their confirmation, the one by blood, the other by death. Hence the apostle in the use of the Greek word (διαθηκη) diversely argues to the nature, necessity, and use of the *death of the Mediator* of the new testament; he was *to die* in the confirmation of it as a testament, he being the testator; and he was *to offer himself* as a *sacrifice in his blood*, for the establishment of it, as it had the nature of a covenant. Wherefore the apostle doth not argue, as some imagine, merely from the *signification of the word* which they say is not exactly rendered. And those who have from hence troubled themselves, and others about the *authority of this epistle*, may thank their own ignorance of the apostle's design and the nature of his argument; and it were well if we all were sensible of our own ignorance, and more apt to acknowledge it when we meet with difficulties in the scripture, than for the most part we are. Alas! how short are our lines when we came to fathom the depth of it! what inextricable difficulties appear

sometimes in passages which, when God is pleased to teach us, are all pleasant and easy.

These things being premised to clear the scope and nature of the apostle's argument, we proceed to a brief exposition of the words.

§4. "For where a testament is, there must also necessarily be the death of the testator." (Γα) for only introduces an illustration from the usage of mankind in such cases, on supposition that this covenant is *also a testament*; for then there must be the death of the testator, as in all testaments amongst men (ὅπου διαθήκη) "*where a testament is,*" that it may be executed. Amongst all sorts of men, living according to the light of nature, and the conduct of reason, the making of testaments is in use; for without it neither can private industry be encouraged, nor public peace maintained. Wherefore, as before observed, the apostle argueth from the common usage of mankind, resolved into the principles of reason and equity. The testament is made by a living man, but whilst he lives, it is dead, or of no use. That it may operate and be effectual, *death* must be brought into the account: even the death (τῆ διαθεμένου) *of the testator*, him who disposeth of things; who hath a *right* so to do and *actually* doth it.

Wherefore, if the new covenant hath the nature of a "testament," it must have a *testator*, and the testator must *die* before it can be of force and efficacy, which was to be proved; and it is further confirmed by what follows:

§5. "For a testament is of force after men are dead otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

A testament, (βεβαια) *is of force*, say we; that is, firm stable, not to be disannulled. "For if it be but a man's

testament, yet if it be confirmed, no man *disannulleth* or added thereto," Gal. iii, 15; it is ratified, made unalterable, so as that it must be executed according to the mind of the testator. (Επὶ νεκροῖς) *among them that are dead*; after men (who made the testament) are dead; for it is opposed to (ὅτε ζῇ ὁ διαθεµενός) "*whilst the testator liveth.*"

Living men have no heirs; which is implied in those words, (ἐπεὶ μηδὲ ἰσχύει *quandoquidem, quoniam*) *seeing that; "otherwise,"* say we; without this accession to the making of a testament, "*it is of no strength at all;*" as yet it *prevaileth not*, it is not of force for the actual distribution of the testator's inheritance or property. A testament is only the signification of a man's *will*, as to what he will have done with his goods *after his death*; wherefore to the force and execution of it his death is necessary.

Again, a testament is *alterable* at the pleasure of him that makes it whilst he is alive; wherefore it can be of no force whilst he is so; for he may change or disannul it when he pleaseth. The foundation therefore of the apostle's argument from this usage amongst men is *firm and stable*.

§6. Whereas the apostle argueth from the similitude between this new testament and the testaments of men, we may consider wherein that *similitude* consists, and also wherein there is a *dissimilitude*, to which his reasonings are to be extended, that no false conclusions be made from them.

1. They agree principally in the *death* of the testator; which alone makes a testament among men effectual and irrevocable; and so is it in this new testament. This is the *fundamental* agreement between them, which therefore alone the apostle insisteth on, although

there are other things which necessarily accompany it. For,

2. In every testament amongst men there are goods *bequeathed* to heirs or legatees, which were the property of the testator. Where a man had nothing to give or bequeath, he can make no testament; for there is nothing but his will concerning the disposal of his *own property* after his decease. So is it in this new testament; grace and glory were the property, the inheritance of Christ, the appointed heir of all things; who in his death, as a testator, made a bequeathment of them all to the elect, appointing them to be heirs of God, and co-heirs with himself.

3. In a testament there is always an *absolute* grant made of the goods bequeathed, without condition or limitation. So is it here also, the good things and inheritance of the kingdom of heaven are bequeathed *absolutely* to all the elect, so as that no intervening can defeat them of it. And whatever in the gospel the grand instrument of this testament or will, prescribes conditions, or exacts terms of obedience, it belongs to it as a *covenant*, and not as a *testament*. Yet

4. It is in the power of the testator to determine both the time, and the way, whereby those to whom he hath bequeathed his property shall be admitted to the actual possession of it. So is it in this case also; the Lord Christ, the great testator, hath determined the *way* whereby the elect shall come to be actually possessed of their legacies; namely—"by faith in him." Acts xxvi, 18; and these things belong to the *illustration* of the comparison insisted on, although the apostle *argues* only from the necessity of the "testator's death."

§7. But notwithstanding these instances of agreement, whereby it appears to have in it, in sundry respects, the nature of a *testament*; yet in many things

ere is also a *disagreement* between them, evidencing at it is also a *covenant*, and abideth so, notwithstanding what it hath of the nature of a testament from the oath of the testator. As,

1. A testator amongst men ceaseth to have any right in, or use of the goods bequeathed by him, when once his testament is of force; by reason of death, which destroys all such title and use. But *our* testator divests himself neither of right nor possession, nor of the use of any of his goods. And this follows in a two-fold difference, the one in the persons, the other in the things bequeathed.

(1.) In the *persons*; for a testator amongst men dieth absolutely; he liveth not again in this world, but lieth down and riseth not until the heavens be no more. Hence all right and use of the things bequeathed cease for ever: but our testator, though he died actually and really to confirm his testament, yet he died not in his *whole person*; and in that very nature wherein he died he lived again, and is alive for evermore. Hence all goods are still in his own power.

(2.) In the *things themselves*; for the things bequeathed in the testaments of men are of that nature, as that the *propriety* of them cannot be vested in many, so as that every one should have a right to, and the enjoyment of all. But the spiritual good things of the new testament are such as, in all the riches and fulness of them, may be in the possession of the testator, and of those also to whom they are bequeathed. Christ *diminisheth* not his own *riches*, much less does he exhaust his own fulness, by communicating of it to others. There is another dissimilitude.

2. If in wills of men there be a bequeathment of goods made to *many*, no one can enjoy the *whole* in-

heritance, but every one is to have his own share and portion only. But in the new testament every one made heir to the *whole* inheritance; all hath the *same* and every one hath the *whole*. For God himself comes their portion, who is *all to all*, and *all to all*.

3. In human testaments, the goods bequeathed are such only as either descended to the testators from their progenitors, or were acquired during their life by their own industry; by their *death* they obtain no new right or title to any thing, only what they had before is now disposed of according to their will. But *our* testator, according to an antecedent contract between God the Father and him, purchased the *whole* inheritance by his *own blood*, obtaining for us eternal redemption.

4. They differ principally in this, that a testament amongst men is not, moreover, a solemn covenant; it needs a correspondent confirmation. The bare signification of the will of the testator, witnessed to, is sufficient; but in *this mystery*, the testament is not merely such, but a covenant also. Hence it was not sufficient for its confirmation, that the testator should die; but he must also offer himself in *sacrifice* by the shedding of his blood. These things I have observed, because, as we shall see, the apostle in the progress of his discourse doth not confine himself to the *mere* notion of a testament, but treats it principally as it had the nature of a covenant.

§8. Hence we may observe;

1. It is a great and gracious condescension in the Holy Spirit, to encourage and confirm our faith by representing the reality of spiritual things by those that are temporal, agreeing with them in their general nature, whereby they are presented to common understanding:

2. There is an *irrevocable grant* of the whole inheritance of grace and glory made to the elect in the new covenant; without this it could not in any sense have the nature of a testament, not be deserving of that name; for a testament is such a *free grant*, and nothing else; and our best plea for a participation of them, before God, is from the *free grant* and donation of them, in the testament of Jesus Christ.

3. As the grant of these things is free and absolute, so the *enjoyment* of them is secured from all interferences by the death of the testator.

VERSES 18—22.

Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

§1. The main drift of the apostle's argument. §2. The passage contains nothing inconsistent with the Mosaic account. §3—11 (I) The words explained in connexion with the original narrative. §12—14. Exposition continued. §15—19. (II.) Observations.

§1. **WE** have before observed, that the apostle intended not to argue absolutely and precisely from the name of a "testament" properly so called, and the use of it among men. For he makes use of these things no farther than as to what such a testament hath in common with a solemn covenant; which is, that they are both confirmed and ratified by *death*. Wherefore it was necessary that the new testament, as it was a *testament*, should be confirmed by death, and as it had the nature

of a *covenant*, it was to be so by *such* a death as was accompanied with *blood-shedding*. The *former* was proved before from the general nature and notion of a testament; the latter is here proved at large from the manner in which the first covenant was confirmed or dedicated.

But the apostle, in this discourse, doth not intend *merely* to prove that the first covenant was "dedicated with blood;" but moreover, in general, what was the *use of blood* in sacrifices on all occasions under the law; whereby he demonstrates the use and efficacy of the blood of Christ, as to all the ends of the new covenant.

§2. There is nothing in all that is here affirmed by the apostle, but is perfectly consistent with the Mosaic history; for the apostle doth not take his account of these things from any *one place* in Moses, but collects what is delivered in the law, in several places, to various ends; designing, as before hinted, not only to prove the dedication of the covenant *by blood*, but to shew also the *whole use* of blood under the law, as to purification and remission of sin. Wherefore he gathers into one head sundry things wherein the sprinkling of blood was of use under the law, as they are occasionally expressed in sundry places; and this one observation removes all the difficulties of the context; which may arise from this one supposition, that the apostle gives here an account *only* of what was done at the *dedication* of the first covenant; so in particular by the addition of those particles (*καὶ δε*, ver. 21,) which we will render, *moreover*, he plainly intimates that what he affirms of the tabernacle and the vessels of its ministry, was that which was done *afterwards*, at another time, and not when the covenant was confirmed.

§3. He affirms that Moses took the blood (*μοσχων και τριγων*) of *calves and goats*; the former (*פרים*) denotes all cattle of the herd, great and small; and there is no necessity, from the words, that we should render the Hebrew, Exod. xxiv, 5, 6, by *oxen*, nor the Greek by *calves*; we might have rendered both words by "*bullocks*." There is no mention at all of "*goats*" in the story of Moses; but we may observe, that there were *two sorts* of offerings made on this occasion, burnt offerings and peace offerings, Exod. xxiv, 5: "They offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings;" wherefore the blood of goats might be used in the peace offering, though it be not mentioned by Moses. Again, the apostle observes, that one *end of the sacrifice*, at the dedication of the first covenant, was purging and making atonement, ver. 22, 23; for in all solemn sacrifices *blood* was sprinkled on the holy things, to purify them and make atonement for them, Deut. xvi, 14, 19, 20. Now this was not to be done but by the blood of an *expiatory* sacrifice; therefore the *burnt offerings* mentioned by Moses were *expiatory sacrifices*, to purge and make atonement; and this sacrifice was principally of "*goats*," Deut. xvi, 7; wherefore the text of Moses cannot be well understood without the exposition of the apostle: and we may add, that although the blood of the peace offering was sprinkled on the altar, Deut. iii, 13, yet was it not *sprinkled on the people*, as this blood was; wherefore there was the use of the blood of "*goats*" also as a *sin offering* in this great sacrifice.

§4. It is affirmed in the text, "that he took the blood, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled it;" but there is mention of none of these things in the story of Moses, but only that he "*sprinkled the blood*:" but the answer is plain; blood under

the law was *sprinkled* either in smaller or greater quantities: hence there were two ways of sprinkling the one with the finger, when, it may be, some few drops of it were to be sprinkled; the other by mixing running water with the blood, and then sprinkling with *scarlet wool and hyssop*, Lev. xiv, 50—51. When Moses sprinkled the altar, book, and people, he did it by one of these two ways; for other there was none. The first way could not do it (with the finger because it was to be done in a great quantity, Exod xxiv, 6—8: it was therefore infallibly done this latter way.

§5. It is added by the apostle, that he “sprinkled the *“book,”* which is not expressed in the story; his design is to express at large the whole solemnity of the confirmation of the *first covenant*, especially not to omit any thing that *blood* was applied to. Moses coming down from the mount, told the people by word of mouth, all things which God had spoken to him, or the sum and substance of the covenant which he would make with them, ver. 5, “And Moses came and told the people *“all the words of the Lord,”* upon the *oral rehearsal* of these words and judgments the people gave their consent to the terms of the covenant. They answered with one voice, “all the words which the Lord hath said we will do,” ver. 3: then Moses made a *record*, or wrote all the words of the Lord in a *book*, ver. 4. This being done, the altar and pillars were prepared, ver. 4, and it is evident that the *book* which he had written was laid on the altar, though it be not expressed. When this was done, he “sprinkled the blood on the altar,” ver. 6, after which, when the book had been sprinkled with blood as it lay on the altar, it is said he “took the book,” that is, off from the altar, and “read in the audience of the people,” ver.

7. The book being now sprinkled with blood, as the instrument and record of the covenant between God and the people, the very same words which were before spoken to the people are now recited or read out of the book; and this could be done for no other reason, but that the book itself being now sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, it was dedicated to be the sacred record of it.

§6. In the text of Moses it is said that he “sprinkled the *people*,” in explanation of which the apostle affirms that he sprinkled *all the people*; for they were all taken into covenant with God; men, women, and children. But it must be granted, that for the blood to be actually sprinkled on all *individuals* in such a numberless multitude, is next to impossible; wherefore it was done in their *representatives*, the heads of their tribes, the chief of the house of their fathers, and the elders who drew nigh to Moses; and these were sprinkled with blood, *in the name and place* of all the people, who were that day taken into covenant.

(Και την σκηνην δε) *Moreover the tabernacle* plainly intimates a progress to another time and occasion; wherefore the words of ver. 21, concerning the sprinkling of the tabernacle and its vessels relate to what follows, ver. 22: “and almost all things are by the law purged with blood;” and not to those that precede about the *dedication* of the first covenant: for the argument he hath in hand is not confined to the use of blood only in *that dedication*, but respects the *whole use* of the blood of sacrifices under the law, which in these words he proceeds to, and closeth in the next verse. He argues not from the *first* dedication of the tabernacle and its vessels, but what was done *constantly* and solemnly every year; and this he doth to prove his general assertion in the next verse, that under the

law almost all things were *purged with blood*; and Moses is here said to *do* what he *appointed* should be done, Lev. xvi. 14—20. The above account, and other, is the design and sense of the apostle; wherefore we may conclude, that the account here given concerning the dedication of the first covenant, as the use of blood for purification under the law, is far from containing any thing *opposite* to the record of Moses concerning the same things, that it gives a full and *clear exposition* of them.

§7. "*Wherefore*," (οθεν) let not any think it strange that the *new testament* was confirmed by the death of the testator; for this is so necessary, that even in the confirmation of the *first* there was that which was analogous to it. And moreover, it was in such a way as was required to the confirmation of a *solemn covenant*; (Ουδε—χωρις αιματος) *neither was it without blood*; that is, it was so and could not be otherwise (Η πρώτη) *the first*, that is, (διαθηκη) *testament*, or covenant; and herein the apostle declares what he perceived intended by the *first* or *old covenant*, whereof he discoursed at large, chap. viii. For the covenant made with the people at Horeb, and no other, was dedicated in the way here described.

§8. Was not (εγκαινισται) *dedicated* without blood? The original word (קדש, εγκαινιζω) is solemnly to *separate* any thing to a sacred use; it is not the *sanctification* of the covenant absolutely that is intended, but the *use* of it. In the killing of the beasts, and the offering of their blood, did the *ratification* of the covenant consist; and which is supposed in its dedication. By the sprinkling of it on the book and the people was its (εγκαινισμος) *consecration*, or dedication to sacred use, as the instrument of the peculiar church relation between God and that people, whereof the book was

the *record*. Hence it follows, that this which belongs so essentially to the solemn confirmation of a *covenant* between God and the church, was necessary also to the dedication and confirmation of *the new covenant*; —which was to be proved.

§9. “For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law;” Moses was the *internuntius* between God and the people in this great transaction. On God’s part he was immediately called to this employment, Exod. iii, and on the part of the people he was chosen to transact all things between God and them. Hence he became in a general sense (μεσσίης) a *mediator* between God and men in giving the law, Gal. iii, 19; “he speak every precept.” (*Vulg. lecto omni mandato*) *having read every command*; (λαληθεισης) *recited*. He so read it in the audience of the people, as that they might hear and understand. It is added, he recited “*every command*.” The whole is reduced to *precepts*; (as Eph. ii, 15, νόμος ἐντολῶν, a *law of commandments*) to intimate the nature of the covenant, which consisted principally in *precepts*, or commandments of obedience, promising no assistance for the performance of them. The good things they were to receive, by virtue of the covenant, depended on the observance of *every precept*. For a curse was denounced against every one that “continued not in all things written in the book of the law to do them,” Deut. xxvii, 26.

To whom did Moses thus read every precept? “To all the people.” In the story it is said indefinitely, in the audience of the people; as afterwards, he sprinkled the people. The apostle adds the note of universality in both places; *all* the people. For whereas these things were transacted with the *representatives* of the people, (for it was naturally impossible that one half

of the individuals should hear Moses reading) they were all equally concerned in what was said and done; yet, after Moses first told the people, that is, the elders of them, all the words of the law, ver. 3, there was probably means used to communicate the things, even to repeat the words, to all the people. "By (according to) *the law*." It cannot be the law in general that the apostle intends, for the greatest part of what is so called, was not yet written; nor doth it in any place contain any precept to this purpose. Wherefore it is a *particular law*, rule or command, that is intended, "according to the *ordinance*" or appointment of God, or it may be according to the sovereign wisdom and pleasure of God in giving the law.

§10. "He took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop;" the blood of the beasts offered for *burnt-offerings*, and *peace-offerings*, ver. 5, 6; he took all their blood in basins, and divided it equally; the one half he sprinkled on the altar, and the other half he sprinkled on the people. That which was sprinkled on the altar, was God's part; and the other was put on the *people*.

This distribution of the blood, the one to make atonement, the other to purify, was to teach the twofold efficacy of the blood of Christ, in making atonement for our justification, and purifying our nature for sanctification. The blood being put into basins, and having water mixed with it to keep it fluid and aspersible, he took a bunch or bundle of hyssop, bound up scarlet wool, and dipping it into the basins, sprinkled the blood, until it was all spent in that service.

This rite, or way of *sprinkling*, was chosen of God as an expressive *sign* of the communication of covenant benefits to the sprinkled; hence the communicating of the benefits of Christ's death for sanctification

is called the “sprinkling of his blood,” 1 Pet. i, 2; and our apostle compriseth all the effects of it to that end under the name of “the blood of sprinkling,” chap. xii, 24. And I fear that those who have used the expression with some *contempt*, when applied to the sign of communicating the benefits of Christ’s death in *baptism*, have not observed a due *reverence of holy things*; for this symbol of “sprinkling” was that which God himself appointed as a *meet token* of the communication of covenant mercy, that is, of his grace in Christ Jesus to our souls.

The object of this act of sprinkling was the *book itself* and all the *people*; the same blood was on the book wherein the covenant was recorded, and the people that entered into it: without this that book would have been to the people like that given to Ezekiel, “written within and without, with lamentations, and mourning and woe,” chap. ii, 10. Nothing but curse and death could they expect from it; but the sprinkling of it with blood, as it lay upon the altar, was a testimony and assurance, that *atonement* should be made by blood for the sins against it. Besides, though the book itself was pure and holy (and so are all God’s institutions) yet *to us* every thing is unclean that is not sprinkled with the blood of Christ.

The blood thus sprinkled was mingled with *water*. The *natural* reason of it was, as we observed, to keep it fluid and *aspersible*; but there was a mystery in it also. That the blood of Christ was *typified* by this blood of the sacrifices used in the dedication of the old covenant, appears from the apostle’s design. And he came not only to make *atonement* for us with his blood, that we might be *justified*: but to *sprinkle* us with the efficacy of it by the spirit of *sanctification* compared to water.

§11. "Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." The difference between the words of Moses and the repetition of them by the apostle is not material; (הִנֵּה) *behold*, in Moses, is rendered by (ταῦτο) *this*; both demonstrative notes of the same thing. For in pronouncing the words Moses shewed the blood to the people; and so, "*behold* the blood," is all one as if he had said, "*this* is the blood." The making of the covenant in the words of Moses is expressed by (כרת) *hath cut*, divided, solemnly made. This the apostle renders by (ἐνετείλατο) *hath enjoined*, or commanded you. And this he doth—partly, to signify the foundation of the people's acceptance of that covenant, which was the *authority* of God enjoining them, or requiring them so to do; partly, to intimate the *nature* of the covenant itself which consisted principally in precepts and injunctions.

That which Moses said, is; "This is the blood of the testament." Hence the apostle proves that *death*, and the shedding of *blood* therein was necessary, to the consecration and establishment of the *first testament*. For so Moses expressly affirms in the dedication of it; "this is the blood of the covenant;" without which it could not have been a firm covenant between God and the people. Not, I confess, from the *nature of a covenant* in general; but from the *special end* of that covenant which, in the confirmation of it, was to prefigure the confirmation of that new covenant, which could not be established but with the blood of a sacrifice. And this adds force and evidence to the apostle's argument; for he proves the necessity of Christ's death and sacrifice for confirming the new covenant hence—that the old covenant, which in its dedication prefigured the new, was not confirmed without blood; and the blood of the sacrifice is called the "*blood of the*"

covenant," because a confirmatory sign of it. So the paschal lamb was called "God's passover," because it was a *sign* and token of God's "passing over the houses of the Israelites when he destroyed the Egyptians," Exod. xii, 11, 12. Hence, in reference to those sacramental expressions, which the old testament church was accustomed to, our Lord called the sacramental *bread and wine* by the names of his *body and blood*.

§12. "Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry," (*καὶ ὁμοίως*) and *in like manner*; this is not a continuation of the former instance as what belongs to it, but a progress to *another argument*, to evince the farther use of the sprinkling of blood for purification and atonement under the old testament; in subserviency to the design of proving also the efficacy of Christ's blood in taking away sins.

Wherefore he shews that as the covenant itself was *dedicated* with blood, which proves the necessity of the blood of Christ for *confirming* the new covenant; so all the ways of solemn worship were *purified* by the same means, which demonstrates its efficacy.

I will not absolutely impose the interpretation—that at the *first dedication* of the tabernacle, with all its vessels and utensils, there was a sprinkling of blood, though not expressly mentioned by Moses; yet I choose rather to refer the words to that solemn sprinkling of it by the high priest, with the blood of the expiatory sacrifice, performed *annually* on the day of atonement; as the *covenant* was dedicated with the sprinkling of blood, so *in like manner afterwards*, the tabernacle and all the vessels of it were sprinkled with blood for their sacred use.

§13. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood." The assertion is limited; (*σχεδόν*) al-

most; for one mode was by *fire*, in things that would endure, Numb. xxxi, 23. And the apostle speaks of *things* as well as *persons*, as the word (*ταῖς*) *things*, declares. And the mode of purification by *water* is expressed in many instances. See Exod. xii, 10; Lev. xvi, 26, 28; chap. xxii, 6, 7.

All other representations of purity were (*ἐν αἵματι*) *with blood* (for *δι' αἵματος*) by the offering and sprinkling of *blood*. And it is worthy of remark, that the purification by *fire* and *water* were of such things which had no immediate influence in the worship of God or in cases wherein the worship of God was not immediately concerned; nor of such things with which the conscience was defiled. They were only of external pollutions, by things in their own nature indifferent, and which had nothing of sin in them. These "*almost all things*," and *absolutely all* which had any inward real moral defilement, were purged with blood which directed to the purifying efficacy of the blood of Christ.

§14. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Some would have these words to contain an application of what is spoken before, to the blood of Christ. But it is manifest that the apostle yet continues in his account of things under the law, and enters not on the application of them till the next verse. Wherefore these words (*κατὰ τὸν νόμον*) *according to the law*, or by virtue of its institutions, are here to be repeated, "*By the law* without shedding of blood, (i. e. sacrifice) there was no remission;" yet, though this season be particularly intended, the axiom is universally true, and applicable to the new covenant; even under it, "without shedding of blood there is no remission."

Real spiritual forgiveness, and gracious acceptance with God, was to be obtained alone by what was *signified*—the sacrifice of Christ himself. If any person neglected that special sacrifice which was appointed to make atonement for his special sin, he was left under the sentence of the law, politically and spiritually there was *no remission*.

There seems to be an *exception* in the case of him who was so *poor* that he could not provide the meanest offering of *blood* for a *sin-offering*; for he was allowed by the law to offer the “tenth part of an ephah of fine flour” for his sin, and it was forgiven him, Lev. v, 11—13. Wherefore the word (*σχεδόν*) *almost*, may be here again repeated, because of this single case. But the apostle hath respect to the *general rule* of the law; and this exception was not an ordinary constitution, but depended on the *impossibility* of the thing itself, whereto it made a gracious condescension; and this necessity oftentimes of itself, without any constitution, suspends a *positive law*, and gives a dispensation to the infringers of it; besides, the nearest approach was made to it that might be; for *fine flour* is the best of bread, whereby man’s life is sustained; and in the offering of it, the offerer testified that by his sin he had forfeited his own life, and all whereby it was sustained, which was meant by the offering of blood.

Now if God gave them such light under the old testament, as that they should know, believe, and profess, that without shedding of blood is no remission, how great is the darkness of men under the new testament, who seek any other way for the pardon of sin beside the blood of Christ!

§15. (II.) We may hence observe,

1. The foundation of a church state among any people, wherein God is to be honored in ordinances of

instituted worship, is laid in a *solemn covenant* between him and them.

2. Approbation of the *terms* of the covenant, consent to them, and a solemn acceptance of them, as *required on our part* to the establishment of any covenant between God and us, and our participation in its benefits.

3. It was the way of God from the beginning, to take *children* of covenanters into the same covenant with their parents; so he dealt with this people in the establishment of the *first* covenant, and he hath made herein no alteration in the establishment of the *second*.

§16. Observe moreover,

1. A covenant that consisted in *mere precepts*, without an exhibition of spiritual strength to enable to obedience, could never *save sinners*.

2. In all our dealings with God, respect must be had to *every one* of his precepts. The reason of it is given by the apostle James, which amounts to this—that the authority of God is the same in every one of them, and so may be despised in the neglect of the least as well as the greatest, Jam. ii, 10, 11.

§17. 1. The first eminent use of writing the book of the law, that is, of any part of the sacred oracles (for *this* book was the *first* that was written,) was that it might be *read to the people*. He gave it not to be shut up by the priests, to be concealed from the people, as containing mysteries unlawful to be divulged or impossible to be understood.

2. This book was both written and read in the language which the people understood, and which they commonly spake.

3. God never required the observance of any rites or duties of worship, without a previous warranty from his word. The people were not obliged to obedience

with respect to *any* positive institutions, until Moses had read to them every precept out of the book.

4. The writing of this book was an eminent *privilege* now first granted to the church, leading to a more perfect and stable condition, than formerly it had enjoyed.

§18. 1. The blood of the covenant will not benefit us without an especial and particular *application* of it to our own souls and consciences. If it be not as well *sprinkled* upon us, as it was *offered* to God, it will not avail us. We shall have no benefit of the *atonement* made at the altar, unless we have its efficacy on our souls to their *purification*.

2. The condescension of God in making, and especially in this manner of confirming a covenant with men, is a blessed object of holy admiration; and this will at length be made manifest in the eternal blessedness of all those by whom the covenant is embraced, and the eternal misery of them by whom it is refused.

3. In all our approaches to God it is the blood of Christ, and the application of it to our consciences, that gives a gracious acceptance with him; without this all is unclean and defiled.

4. Even holy things and institutions, that are in themselves clean and unpolluted, are *relatively* defiled by the unholiness of those who use them; pure in themselves, but defiled to them. So was the tabernacle, because of the uncleannesses of the people; for to the unclean all things are unclean.

§19. We may again observe,

1. There was a great variety of legal purifications; for as all of them together could not absolutely purge sin; so none of them by themselves could *fully represent* that one sacrifice by blood, whereby all sin was to be purged; therefore were they *multiplied*.

2. This variety argues that in ourselves we are ready to be polluted on all occasions. Sin cleaveth to all we do, and is ready to defile us even in our best duties.

3. This *variety* of institutions was a great part of the bondage of the old testament church, a yoke that they were not able to bear.

4. The great mystery by which God instructed the church from the foundation of the world, and especially under the Mosaical law, was, that all purging of sin was to be by *blood*—to be looked for from the blood of Christ alone.

5. This is the greatest demonstration of the demerit of sin, of the holiness, righteousness, and grace of God, viz. that without shedding of blood it could not be pardoned. And what glory does this reflect on the love and grace of God, in that he spared not his only Son, but gave him (O stupendous gift!) to be a bloody sacrifice for us all.

VERSE 23.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens, should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

§1. Connexion and design. §2. Exposition. The purification of the patterns of things in the heavens, how necessary. §3. Heavenly things themselves purified. §4, 5. How purified. §6. Particularly, by what means. §7. Observations.

§1. **O**UR apostle concludes his whole discourse with an elegant comparison between the law and the gospel, wherein he compriseth, in few words, the substance of them both, as to their effects on the souls of men. As to both sorts of sacrifices it is granted, in

general, that they purged the things to which they were respectively applied; and here we have the *difference* also laid down as to the things purified; and consequently the nature of their respective purifications.

§2. "It was therefore necessary," &c. (Οὖν) *therefore*, hath an equal respect to both parts of the assertion. (Αναγκη) *it was necessary*; that is, from God's institutions; for there was no necessity in the nature of the things themselves, that the patterns of heavenly things should be purged with these sacrifices; but, on supposition that God *would represent* by them the purification of the heavenly things, it was necessary that they should be thus purged with blood. And, on supposition of the same divine appointment, that the heavenly things themselves should be purified, it was necessary that they should be purified with better sacrifices than these, which were altogether insufficient to that end.

(Τα μεν υποδειγματα των εν τοις ουρανοις) *that the patterns of the things in the heavens, that is, heavenly things*; the same with (ανιστηπων των αληθινων) "the figures of the true," in the next verse; the covenant, the book, the people, the tabernacle, with all the vessels of its ministry. These he calls (υποδειγματα) *patterns*, which were framed according to the *original ideu* of the heavenly things themselves represented to Moses. Herein alone consisted their honor, worth, and use, that they were "patterns of heavenly things."

§3. "Should be purified with these." (Καθαριζεσθαι) *purified*. That which was *annual* in the sprinkling of the *tabernacle and its vessels*, because of the uncleannesses of the people, ver. 22, is here intended.

The *means* whereby they were thus to be purified, is (ταυτοις) *with these*. In the next clause the "heavenly

things themselves" are said to be purified (*hwas*) in sacrifices; but the purification of these patterns is not absolutely confined to sacrifices. Water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and the ashes of an heifer were, in some cases, required. *With these*, that is, with all those things which were appointed by the law to be used in their purification or dedication to sacred use.

§4. "But the heavenly things themselves with their sacrifices." *The heavenly things themselves*; that is, the things whereof the others were the patterns, by which God represented them to the church; all the effects of the council of God in Christ, in the redemption, worship, salvation, and eternal glory of the church; Christ himself in all his offices, with all the spiritual and eternal effects of them on the souls and consciences of men. For of all these things those which the law were patterns, and are constantly called "heavenly things," Heb. iii, 1; Eph. i, 3; John iii, 12; Eph. ii, 6. The church itself and its worship are of the same kind; the things *principally* to be purified by these sacrifices; it is God's heavenly kingdom; Eph. i, 25, 26: heaven itself is also comprised, not absolutely, but as it is the mansion of Christ, and there deemed in the presence of God for evermore.

§5. Now the inquiry will be, how these things are said to be *purified*? For of *real* purification from uncleanness only the church is capable; that is, the souls and consciences of men. I answer, that we are to have recourse to that two-fold sense of purification—*external dedication*, and *internal cleansing*; both which are expressed in scripture by *sanctification*. Most of the things that were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices at the giving of the law, were purified in the *first sense* only. The covenant, the book of

the law, and the tabernacle with all its vessels, were purified in their sacred dedication to God and his service. And *thus* were all the *heavenly things* themselves purified. Christ himself was sanctified, consecrated, dedicated to God by his own blood. "He sanctified himself," John xvii, 19; "by the blood of the covenant," Heb. x, 29, even when he was *consecrated* or *made perfect* through sufferings, chap. ii, 10. So was the *church* and the whole worship of it *dedicated* to God; made holy to him, Eph. v, 25, 26; and *heaven* itself was dedicated to be an habitation for ever to the mystical body of Christ, in perfect peace with the angels above, who had never sinned, Eph. i, 10; Heb. xii, 22, 24.

But there was, moreover, a *real internal purification* of the souls and consciences of men, Eph. v, 25, 26; Tit. ii, 14. They are "*washed* in the blood of Christ," Rev. i, 5; and thereby "*cleansed* from all sin," 1 John i, 7. And *heaven itself* is, in a sense, thus purified; even as the *tabernacle* was because of the sins of the people among whom it was, Lev. xv, 15. And, upon the sin of man, a state of enmity ensued between the *angels* above and *men* below; so that heaven was not a meet habitation for them both, until they were reconciled; which was done only in the sacrifice of Christ. Eph. i, 10. Hence, if the heavenly things were not defiled *in themselves*, yet *in relation to us* they were; which is now taken away.

§6. Of these heavenly things, it is said, that they were "purified (κρείσσει θυσίαις παρὰ τὰς) *with better sacrifices than these.*" All sober expositors agree that here is an *enallage of number*, the plural put for the singular. The one sacrifice of Christ is alone intended; and is so expressed because it answered all other sacrifices, exceeded them all in dignity, and was of

more use and efficacy than they all. It was necessary *these things* should be *thus purified*, as what the holiness of God required, and what became his righteousness, Heb. ii, 10. And what but the sacrifice of Christ, with the everlasting efficacy of his most precious blood, could thus purify the heavenly things, and dedicate the whole new creation unto God?

The last thing we shall take notice of, is, that this dedication and purification is ascribed to (*θυσία*) a *sacrifice*, a *slain sacrifice*, a sacrifice by mactation, or shedding of blood. Wherefore the sacrifice of Christ, in his death and bloodshedding, is the cause of these things. Other (*θυσία*) *bloody sacrifice* of him there was none.

§7. Hence we may observe,

1. The glory and efficacy of all ordinances of divine worship, which consist in outward observance, (as the sacraments of the gospel) consist in this, that they represent and exhibit heavenly things, which power they have from divine institution alone.

2. We should learn hence, a due respect for the holiness of God in his worship and service. He would never admit of any thing therein, but was *purified* according to his own institution. Without a due apprehension of this, and endeavor to have both our persons and our services purified by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, neither they nor we can be accepted before him.

3. The one sacrifice of Christ, with what ensued upon it, was the only means to render effectual all the counsels of God concerning the redemption and salvation of the church; Eph. i, 3—7; Rom. iii, 24—26.

4. Neither could heavenly things have been made meet for us, nor we have been meet for their enjoyment, had they not been *dedicated*, and we *purified*,

by the sacrifice of Christ. There was no suitableness neither in them to us, nor in us to them, until it was introduced by the blood of Christ. Without this, heavenly things would not have been heavenly to the minds and souls of men; they would neither please nor satisfy them; unless *they themselves* are purged, all things, even heavenly things themselves, would be unclean and defiled to them, Tit. i, 15.

5. Every eternal mercy, every spiritual privilege, is both *purchased* for us, and sprinkled for our use by the blood of Christ.

6. There is such an uncleanness in our natures, persons, duties, and worship, that unless *they and we* are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, neither we nor they can have any acceptance with God.

7. The sacrifice of Christ is the one, only, everlasting fountain and spring of all sanctification and sacred dedication; whereby the whole new creation is purified and dedicated unto God.

VERSE 24.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

§1. Introduction, and subject stated. §2. (I.) The subject spoken of. §3. (II.) Christ's entrance into heaven itself. §4. (III.) The end of his sacerdotal entrance into heaven.

§1. **T**HE *opposition* between the high priests of the law, and their sacrifices, with their efficacy, and the Lord Christ with his sacrifice and its efficacy, is farther carried on in this verse. Had he purified the things only on the *earth*, we could have entered only into an *earthly* sanctuary, as did the high priest of old. But he entered, as the apostle now declares, into *heaven* itself.

In the words there is,

I. The *subject* spoken of, "Christ."

II. A *double proposition* concerning him;—that he is not entered into the holy places made with hands; and—that he is entered into heaven itself.

III. The *end* of what is so affirmatively ascribed to him; "to appear in the presence of God for us."

§2. (I.) The *subject* spoken of is "Christ." And what is in general ascribed to him, or spoken of him, is an *entrance*; that which was the peculiar dignity of the high priest of old, wherein the principal discharge of his duty consisted, and on which the efficacy of his whole ministration did depend. Wherefore such an *entrance* must our high priest have after he had offered himself once for all.

§3. (II.) This *entrance* is "not into holy places made with hands," &c. What the apostle calls (υποδειγματα) *patterns* in the foregoing verse, he here calls (αἰμιματα) *figures*: they express the same things in different respects. As the delineation of heavenly things in them were obscure and dark, they were (υποδειγματα) *similitudes*, resemblances of heavenly things; as that representation was a transcript from the original pattern and idea in the mind of God, and shewed to Moses in the mount, they were (αἰμιματα) *express figures*.

The place into which he entered is called "*heaven itself*."

The apostle hath in several places affirmed, that in his ascension he passed "through the heavens;" and was made "higher than the heavens;" wherefore by this, "*heaven itself*," some *place* called so by way of eminency is intended. This in the scripture is sometimes called the "heaven of heavens," and the "third heaven;" the place of the peculiar residence of the

presence, majesty, and glory of God, and of his throne; where all his blessed saints enjoy his presence, and all his holy angels minister unto him.

The entrance of Christ into heaven as our High Priest, was into it as the *temple of God*, wherein the chief thing considerable is the *throne of grace*. For it is that which answers to the entrance of the high priest into the holy place in the tabernacle. And he entered likewise into heaven *triumphantly*, as it was the *palace of God*, the throne of the great king, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; but this he did in the execution of his *kingly* office with authority and power.

§4. (III.) The *end* of this sacerdotal entrance of Christ into heaven is “now to appear in the presence of God for us;” (vvv) *now*, at this present season, and always. What the other priests did was of no *continuance*; but this “*now*” is expressive of the whole time, from the entrance of Christ into heaven to the consummation of all things. He never departs out of the sanctuary, to prepare for a new sacrifice, as others did. There is no moment of time wherein it may not be said, “He *now* is there (αμφανισθηναι) to *appear* in the presence of God for us.” Absolutely considered, his entrance into heaven had other ends; but this is the only end of his entering into it *as God’s temple*, as our high priest: and the whole discharge of the remaining duties of his sacerdotal office are comprised in this word.

He thus appears (τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ) *vultui, conspectui; faciei Dei*) in the immediate presence of God, in opposition to the typical symbols of it in the tabernacle, before which the high priest presented himself.

The high priest appeared before the *ark*, the *cherubims*, and *mercy-seat*, composed into the form of a

throne; Christ enters into the *real* presence of God, appearing in his sight, with full assurance of success in his undertaking, and his full discharge from all imputed guilt. Had he not made an end of it, had he not absolutely been freed from it, he could not have thus appeared with confidence and boldness in the presence of God.

This is said to be done (*ὡς ἡμεῖς*) *for us*, which refers only to the term "*appear*;" to *appear for us*, that is, to do all things with God for us, at the throne of grace, that we may be saved: he is, therefore, in this important view the great *representative* of the church, the whole church of his redeemed, towards God. There is more in it than merely *for our good*; it is as if it were the appearance of an advocate, a *law appearance* in the behalf of others, thus 1 John ii, 1, 2. He will at the end present to God his whole church, with the matchless work of his love and grace accomplished towards it. He first presents it to *himself*, and then to God, Eph. v, 26, 27. He presents them as the portion given him out of fallen mankind to be redeemed, saying, "Behold I and the children which thou gavest me; thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" I present them to thy love and care, holy Father, that they may enjoy all the fruits of thy eternal love, all the benefits of my death and sacrifice. Thus the actual application of redeeming grace and mercy to the church, and every member of it, depends on our great High Priest's intercessory appearance before God.

VERSE 25.

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others.

§1. That Christ should offer himself more than once was both needless and impossible. §2. A popish objection answered. §3. Exposition continued.

§1. **T**HE high priest ended not this work of offering sacrifices by his entrance into the holy place, but was to repeat the same again every year; this, therefore, in correspondence with the type, might be expected from Christ also; that he should offer himself again, and so have another entrance into the presence of God: this the apostle not only denies, but in the next verse gives a demonstration of its impossibility. (*Ουδε*) *nor yet*, answers to the negative in the first part of the preceding verse. It doth not follow, saith the apostle, that because as an high priest he entered into heaven, as the high priests of the law entered into the holy place not made with hands, that he should therefore offer himself *often*, as the high priest offered every year; it was not required of him; it was both needless and impossible: *needless*, from the perfection of that one offering; "By one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified:" *impossible*, from the condition of his person, he could not die often.

§2. The expositors of the *Roman* church raise an objection on this place: if Christ cease to offer himself, then it seems his *sacerdotal office* ceaseth also; for it belongs to that office to offer sacrifices continually. But there is no force in the objection; for it belongs to no priest to offer any other or any more sacrifices but what were sufficient and effectual to the *end* of his office.

Besides, though the one sacrifice of Christ be not actually repeated, yet it is always virtually applied; and this belongs to the present, the constant discharge of his sacerdotal office: so doth also his *appearance* in heaven for us, with his intercession, where he still continues in the actual exercise of his priesthood, so far as is needful or possible. But they have an answer of their own to their own objection: they say, therefore, that Christ continueth to offer himself *every day* in the sacrifice of the mass, by the hands of the priests; and this sacrifice of him, though it be *unbloody*, yet is a true real sacrifice of Christ, the *same* with that which he offered on the cross.

It is better never to raise objections than thus to answer them; for this is not to expound the words, but to dispute against the doctrine of the apostle. That the Lord Christ hath by the *one offering* of himself for ever perfected them that are sanctified, is a fundamental article of faith; but this is expressly denied in the doctrine of the *frequent repetition* of his sacrifice. The repetition of sacrifices arose solely from their imperfection, as the apostle declares, chap. x, 2; and if it undeniably proved an *imperfection* in the sacrifices of the law, that they were *repeated* once every year in one place only, how great must the imperfection of the sacrifice of Christ be esteemed, if it be not effectual to take away sin, and perfect them that are sanctified, unless it be repeated *every day*, and that, it may be, in a *thousand places*?

To say that Christ offereth himself *often* is expressly and in terms contradictory to the apostolic assertion. Whatever, therefore, they may apprehend of the offering of him by their priests, yet most certainly he doth not every day *offer himself*; but as the faith of the church is concerned in no offering of Christ but

that which he *himself* offered, by the eternal Spirit, once for all; so the pretence to offer him often by the priests is highly *sacrilegious*.

§3. "As the high priest;" that is, any one, in any age of the church, from the institution of that priesthood to the expiration of it. "*He entereth,*" in the present tense, denoting the constitution of the law; this is what the law requireth: and hereby, as in other instances, the apostle lays before their consideration a *scheme* of their ancient worship, as it was at first established, that it might be the better compared with the dispensation of the new covenant and the ministry of Christ. "*To the holy place.*" The most holy place in the tabernacle or temple, the holy place made with hands. "*Yearly,*" once in an annual revolution, on the tenth day of the month *Tisri*, answering to our September. "*With the blood of others,*" blood that was not his own, as the *Syriac* expresses it; *by virtue* of the blood of others, which he carried with him into the holy place.

What is denied of Christ, the antitype, is the *repetition* of his service, because of the *perfection* of the sacrifice; the other being repeated because of their *imperfection*.

VERSE 26.

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

§1. Subject stated. §2. (I.) The truth and necessity of the assertion proved. §3. The Socinian gloss refuted. §4. (II.) The confirmation of the former argument. §5. End of the world, what. §6. Exposition continued. §7. Observations.

§1. **I** SHALL not repeat the various conjectures of expositors; but rather give that account of the whole,

and the several parts, which, according to the best of my understanding, represents the mind of the Holy Ghost with perspicuity and clearness. There are two parts of the words:

I. A *reason*, confirming the foregoing assertion, that Christ was not often to offer himself, as the high priest did offer sacrifice every year when he entered into the holy place. "For then must he," &c.

II. A *confirmation* of that reason from the nature and end of the sacrifice of Christ, as stated in the matter of fact according to divine appointment. But now once in "the end," &c.

§2. (I.) From a supposition of the contrary to what he had affirmed, the apostle proves not only the *truth* but the *necessity* of his assertion. "For then he *must*," he *ought*; he would have been a debtor, as the *Syriac* speaks; it would have been due from him, and (*necesse estate medii*) indispensably required. "*Often*," frequently; as the high priest of old, once every year. Since, or rather, "*from the foundation of the world*," from the first entrance of sin and giving of the first promise, which was immediately, after the creation. So Christ, for the same reason, is said to be a lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. Wherefore "the foundation of the world," is its creation; "before the foundation of the world" is an expression of eternity, and the eternal divine counsels, Ephes. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 20.

§3. The nature and force of the argument is taken from the most cogent topics; for the *suffering* and *offering* of Christ are inseparable; the Lord Christ *offered himself* to God by his *suffering death*; being himself both the priest and the sacrifice: and this wholly explodes the *Socinian* imagination of the nature of Christ's offering; for if his *offering* might be

separated from his *suffering*, and were nothing but the presentation of himself in the presence of God in heaven, it might have been *reiterated* without any inconvenience; nor would there have been any force in the apostle's arguing: for if his oblation be only that *presentation* of himself, if God had ordered that it should have been done only at *certain seasons*, as once every year, no inconvenience would have ensued.

Wherefore the argument is firm on *this supposition*,—that if he were often to *offer* himself, then was he often to *suffer* also; but that he should do the latter, was as inconsistent with the wisdom of God and the dignity of his own person, as altogether needless as to the end of his offering; and, as the sufferings of Christ were necessary to the expiation of sin, so he suffered neither more, nor oftener, than was necessary.

The argument is also built on another supposition—that there was a *necessity of the expiation of sin*, on behalf of all that were to be saved *from the foundation of the world*; and those by whom this supposition is rejected, as it is by the *Socinians*, can give no color of force to this argument, although they invent many allusions; but whereas the apostle discourseth of the only way and means of expiating of sin, to prove that it was done at once, by the one offering of Christ, which needed no repetition; he supposeth that sin entered into the world from the *foundation* of it, or in the apostasy of our first parents—That notwithstanding this entrance, many who were sinners, as the patriarchs from the beginning, and the whole believing Israel of God under the Old Testament, had their sins expiated, pardoned, and were eternally saved. That none of the sacrifices which they offered themselves could expiate sin. That all this, therefore, was effected by virtue of the *one sacrifice* of Christ. Hence it

follows unavoidably, that if the virtue of this one offering did not extend to the taking away of all their sins, that then he must often have suffered and offered from the foundation of the world; or they must all have perished—at least all but those of that generation wherein he might once have suffered. This is the true force and reason of the argument in these words, which is powerful, cogent, and conclusive.

§4. (II.) The latter part of the verse contains the confirmation of the argument proposed in the former, which consists in a declaration of the true state, nature, efficacy, and circumstances of the one offering of Christ now accomplished. “But now once in the end of the world;” (*νυν*) *now*, is only a note of opposition joined with (*δε*) *but*; *but now* it is otherwise; he *did not* offer himself often since the world began. A *limitation of time* may also be included in it; *now*, at this time and season, things are otherwise constituted. This makes the opposition still more emphatical. *Now* it is, that Christ hath suffered, and not before. He did this (*απαξ*) *once*, which is opposed to (*πολλαις*) *often*. He speaks of it as a thing once performed, and then past, which cannot be referred to the *continual presentation* of himself in heaven. Thus it is, saith he, in fact; he hath not often, but *once only* offered himself. “In the end of the world,” not *then*, but *now*; not *often*, but *once*; not from the *foundation* of the world, but in the *end* of it; but why he should express that time by “*the end of the world*,” the words by which our Savior expresses the last period of time, Matt. xxviii, 20, is not so plain.

§5. The Greek terms (*αιων* and *αιωνες*) answer to the Hebrew ones (*עולם* and *עולמים*) which denote the “*world*,” not absolutely, with respect to its *essence* or *substance*, but its *duration* and *succession of ages*; and

the "succession of the times" of the world, with respect to God's dealing with the church, (called *οικονομία των καιρων*, Ephes. i, 10;) may be referred to three general heads. *First*, the time before the law; *secondly*, that under the law; *thirdly*, that of the exhibition of Christ in the flesh to the end of the world. This last season absolutely considered, is called (*πληρωμο των καιρων*) *the fulness of time*, when all that God had designed in the dispensation of his grace, was come to that head and consistency, wherein no alteration should be made to the end of the world. This is that season which, with respect to those that went before, is called (*συνίλευσις των αιωνων*) *the end of the world*, or the *last age* of the world, the consummation of the dispensation of time, no change being afterwards to be introduced. This season, with respect to the coming of Christ, is called (*אחרית הימים*) *the latter days*, or *the end of the days*, or of that dispensation of God in (*עולם*) *all the allotted age* of the church, it was the *last*, or *end* of them; that wherein the whole divine disposition of things had its consummation; wherefore, both the *entrance* and the *end* of this *season* are called by the *same name*; the beginning of it here and the end of it, Matt. xxviii, 20. For the whole is but *one* entire season; and the *preposition* (*επι*) in this construction, with a dative case, signifies the *entrance* of any thing; as (*επι θανάτῳ*) *at the approach of death*; wherefore, whatever may be in the duration of the world afterwards, the appearance of Christ to offer himself, was (*επι συνίλευσις*) *in the end of the world*; that is, at the entrance of the last season of God's dispensation of grace. Thus it was, saith the apostle, in fact; then did Christ offer himself, and *then only*.

6. With respect to this season, three things are affirmed of Christ in the following words:—What he

did, "he appeared"—to what end—"to take away sin"—by what means, "by the sacrifice of himself." These words (*δια της θυσιας αυτου*) *by the sacrifice of himself*, refer, to (*εις αβελησιν αμαρτιας*) *the putting away of sin*. He was manifested to *put away sin by sacrifice*—the sacrifice of himself. This reading of the words is evidently to the apostle's intention. More particularly,

1. There is *what he did*. "He appeared," he was manifested. This (*μεφανερωσις*) *manifestation* of Christ "in the end of the world," is the same with his being "manifested in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii, 16; or his coming into the world, taking on him the seed of Abraham that he might suffer and offer himself to God; nor is the word ever used to express the appearance of Christ before God in heaven.

2. The *end* of this appearance of Christ was, "to put away sin." By "*sin*" the apostle intends the whole of its nature and effects, its root and fruits; sin in its guilt, power, and punishment; sin absolutely and universally, as it was an apostasy from God, as it was the cause of all distance between God and us, and it was the work of the devil; sin in all it was, and all it could effect; sin in its whole empire and dominion, as it entered by the fall of Adam, invaded our nature by its power, oppressed our persons with its guilt, filled the whole world with its fruits, gave existence and right to death and hell, with power to Satan to rule in and over mankind, so as it rendered us obnoxious to the curse of God and eternal punishment. "*Sin*," in its *whole extent*, he "appeared to put away;" that is, with respect to the *church*, which is sanctified by his blood, and dedicated to God.

The word which we render "putting away," is (*αβελησις*, *abrogatio*, *dissolutio*, *destructio*) *an abrogation, disannulling, destroying, disarming*. It is the term

for taking away the force, power, and obligation of a law. The *power of sin*, as to all its effects, whether sinful or penal, is called *its law*, Rom. viii, 2. Christ *appeared* to *abrogate* this law of sin, to deprive it of its whole power, that it should not *condemn* us any more, nor bind us over to punishment, by *making atonement* for it; and to *destroy* its subjective power, by purging our consciences from dead works, 1 John iii, 8.

3. The way whereby he did this was (*δια τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ*, i. e. *εαυτοῦ*) *by the sacrifice of himself*; that sacrifice wherein he both *suffered* and *offered* himself to God; for that *both* are included, the opposition made to his *often suffering* abundantly evinceth. This, therefore, is the design and meaning of the words, to evidence that Christ did not offer himself to God often, or more than *once*, as the high priest offered *every year* before his entrance in the holy place; for he need not be offered any more, because he at once made a total abolition and destruction of sin.

§7. Hence we may observe:

1. The assured salvation of the church of old from the foundation of the world, by virtue of the one offering of Christ, is a strong confirmation of the faith of the church at present to look for and expect thereby everlasting salvation.

2. It is the prerogative of God, and the effect of his wisdom, to determine the time and seasons of revealing himself, and dispensing his grace to the church: hence alone it is that Christ appeared in the end of the world; though, it is allowed, many things evidence a *condecency* to divine wisdom in the determination of that season. Hereby, particularly, the world had a full and *sufficient trial* of what happiness it could attain by all its *efforts and enjoyments*; and hereby Sa-

tan had time *time* to fix and establish his kingdom in the world, by which means his destruction might be the more gloriously conspicuous.

3. God had a design of infinite wisdom and grace in sending Christ and his appearance in the world, which could not be frustrated. "He appeared to *put away sin.*"

4. Sin had erected a dominion and a tyranny over all men, as by a *law*; and unless this law be abrogated and abolished, we can have no deliverance or true liberty.

5. No power of man, no power of any *mere creature*, was able to evacuate, disannul, or abolish this law of sin.

6. The destruction and dissolution of this law and power of sin, was the *great end* of the coming of Christ to discharge his priestly office by the sacrifice of himself; no other way could it be effected.

7. It is the glory of Christ, and the safety of the church, that, by his one offering the sacrifice of himself once for all, he hath abolished the condemning law of sin.

VERSES 27, 28.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so also Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

§1. Connexion of the words and statement of the subject. §2. (I.) The comparison, wherein it consists. §3, 4. Its exposition. §5, 6. (II.) The use and end of Christ's offering. §7, 8. (III.) Its consequence. §9, 10. (IV.) Observations.

§1. **THESE** verses put a close to our apostle's heavenly discourse concerning the causes, nature, ends and

efficacy of the *sacrifice of Christ*, wherewith the new covenant was dedicated and confirmed; and in the words there is a *treble confirmation* of its oneness and efficacy, for which he had before pleaded:

I. In an elegant instructive similitude; “and as it is appointed,” &c. ver. 27.

II. In a declaration of the use and end of the offering “he was once offered to bear the sins of many.”

III. In its consequences; “his second appearance to the salvation of believers,” ver. 28.

§2. (I.) In the comparison we must consider the force of it in general, and explain the words; as men *must die*, and every one but *once*; so Christ was to *die*, to *suffer*, to *offer* himself, and that but *once*. But he not only illustrates his former assertion by a fit comparison, but gives the *reason* of the one offering of Christ from its necessity and designation; for, *inasmuch as it was so* with mankind, it was necessary that Christ should suffer once for the expiation of sin, and the salvation of sinners. How was it with mankind in this interesting matter? All, on account of sin, were subject to the law and its tremendous curse; the curse of *temporal death*, to be undergone *penally*, and the curse of *eternal judgment*, wherein they were to perish for evermore. It is appointed, decreed, absolutely determined of God, that sinful men should once die, and after that come to judgment for their sins; and likewise, if not divinely relieved, they must perish eternally. But the *one offering* of Christ, *once offered*, is prepared for their relief and deliverance; and the relief (O wonderful effect of infinite wisdom!) is eminently proportionate to the evil, the remedy to disease; for, as man was to die *once* legally and penally for sin, by the sentence of the law, and no more; so Christ died, suffered and offered *once* and no more, to bear sin, to expiate it, and thereby

even "to take away death," as far as it was *penal*; as *after death* men must appear again the *second time to judgment*, to undergo condemnation; so Christ after his once offering to take away sin and death, shall appear *the second time to free us from judgment*, and to bestow on us eternal salvation. Wherefore, there is in these verses an entire opposition and comparison between the law, and the gospel; the *curse* due to sin, and *redemption* by Christ Jesus.

§3. But we proceed with the *interpretation* of the words. (*Ἀρρομισαι, statutum est*) *it is appointed, determined, enacted*. God himself has thus appointed it; none else can determine these things; and the word equally respects *both parts* of the assertion, *death* and *judgment*, being both equally from the constitution of God.

Death was so far *natural* from the beginning, as that the frame and construction of our nature were in themselves liable and subject to it; but that it should have *actually* invaded our nature unto its dissolution, without the intervention of sin its *meritorious cause*, is contrary to the "original state of our *relation* to God," the nature of the *covenant* whereby we were obliged to obedience, the promised *reward*, with the *threatening* of death in case of disobedience. Wherefore the *law, statute, or constitution* here referred to, is, Gen. ii, 17; iii, 19, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die—dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Thus it is appointed (*ἀνθρωπος*) *to men*, all men indefinitely; it is their lot and portion; not merely *as men*, but as *sinful men*; for it is of *sin* and its effects, with their *removal* by Christ, the apostle discourseth; it is appointed for them (*ἀποθαινειν*) *to die*, i. e. *penally* for sin, as *death* was threatened in that *penal statute* mentioned in the curse of the law; and *death* un-

der that consideration alone is taken away by the death of Christ. The sentence of dying *naturally* is continued towards all; but the *moral* nature of dying, with its consequences, are removed from some by Christ. The law is not *absolutely* reversed; but what was *formally penal* in it is taken away.

§4. The *second part* of the assertion is; “but after this the judgment.” This by the same divine and unalterable constitution, is “appointed unto all.” God hath “appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.” Nothing shall *interpose* between death and judgment to make any alteration in the state or condition of any. The *souls* of them who are dead are yet alive, but are utterly incapable of any *change* in their condition between death and judgment; as death leaves men, so shall judgment find them. But we should observe that *judgment here* is opposed to the *second appearance* of Christ to the salvation of believers, which is the *general judgment* of all at the last day, and not what passes at death. (Κρισις or κριμα) *judgment*, used with respect to this day, signifies a *condemnatory sentence* only; for (αναστασις κρισεως) the *resurrection of judgment*, is opposed to (αναστασις ζωης) the *resurrection of life*, John v, 29; see ver. 22—24; so “judgment,” that is, *condemnation* for sin, follows after *death* in the righteous constitution of God, by the sentence of the law. And as Christ by his death doth not take away *death absolutely*, but only as it was *penal*; so on his second appearance, he doth not take away *judgment absolutely*, but only as it is a *condemnatory sentence*, with respect to believers; “for as we must all *die*, so we must all *appear* before his judgment seat,” Rom. xiv, 10. But as he hath promised that those who believe in him, “shall not see death;” for they are passed from death unto life; that

is, as it is penal; so also hath he said, that they shall not come (εις κρισιν) *to judgment*, John v, 24; the condemnatory sentence of the law; for the nature and manner of this judgment, see the Exposition on chap. vi, ver. 5.

§5. (II.) We came to declare the use and end of the offering of Christ. (Ουτω) *so, in like manner*, as a divine remedy against the other state of things, in a *blessed condecency* to divine wisdom, goodness, and grace, Christ "*was offered*," that is, he was not only the *priest* who offered, but the *sacrifice* that was offered; both were necessary, and the reason why it is here so expressed, is, because his *offering* is spoken of as it was by *death* and *suffering*. It was (απαξ) *once only*; this joined, as it is here, with a word of the *preter tense*, can signify nothing but an action or passion, then *past and determined*. It is not any *present continued* action of Christ, such as the presentation of himself in heaven, that can be here signified.

§6. The *end* of Christ's being thus once offered, and which, as one offering perfectly effected, was, (εις τα πολλων αμαρτιας ανενεγκειν) *to bear the sins of many*. There is an *antithesis* between (πολλων) *of many*, and (ανθρωποις) *to men* in the verse foregoing. "Men," expressed indefinitely in that proposition, intends *all men* universally; but the *relief* by Christ, though it be exhibited to men *indefinitely*, extends not to *all universally*, but to *many* of them only; that it doth not extend to *all eventually* is confessed; and this expression is declarative of the *intention* of God, or of Christ himself in his offering; see Ephes. v, 25, 26; he was thus offered for those *many*, to "*bear their sins*." The signification of the word (αναφερω) is determined by the apostle Peter, by whom alone it is used on the same occasion, 1 Ephes. ii, 24; (ος τας αμαρτιας ημων αυτος

ἀνῆνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σωματί αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον) “who himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” That place, compared with this, utterly everts the *Socinian* fiction of the oblation of Christ in heaven. He was offered (ἀνένεγκεν) “to bear the sins of many;” *when* and *how* did he do it? (ἀνῆνεγκε) “he bear our sins in his *own* body on the tree;” wherefore, *then* he offered himself for them; and in his *suffering*; moreover, wherever in the Old Testament the corresponding Hebrew term (כָּשַׁל) is translated by the present word (ἀναφέρω) in the *Septuagint*, as Numb. xlv, 33; Isa. liii, 12; or by its root (φέρω) to *bear* with reference to sin, it constantly signifies to *bear the punishment of it*; and this is not opposed to the *appearance* of men before God at the last day, but to their *death*, which they were once to undergo.

§7. (III.) Let us now consider the consequence of Christ’s offering; “and unto them that look for him, he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” *The second time*; the *first* was his coming in the *flesh*, to make atonement for sin in the sacrifice of himself; the *second*, his coming in *glory*, to judge all, when he shall completely *finish* the eternal salvation of the church. (Ὁφθῆσεται) *He shall appear to, he shall be seen of*; there shall be a public sight of him: he was seen on earth in the days of his flesh; but he is now in heaven, within the veil of that glory which we cannot look into. The heavens must receive him “until the time of the restitution of all things.” He can indeed *appear* to whom he pleaseth, by an extraordinary dispensation; so he was seen of *Stephen* “standing at the right hand of God.” Acts vii; so he appeared to *Paul*, 1 Cor. xv, 8. But as to the state of the church in general, and in the discharge of his mediatorial office, he is not seen of any. So the high priest

was not seen of the people after his entrance into the holy place until he came out again. Even concerning the person of Christ, "we live by faith and not by sight." And it is the great exercise of faith to live on the invisible actings of Christ on the behalf of the church. The foundation of it consists in our infallible certainty and expectation of his second appearance, and of our seeing him again, Acts i, 11, yea, "we know that our Redeemer liveth," and we shall see him with our eyes; whilst he is thus invisible, the world triumphs as if he were not; "where is the promise of his coming?" And indeed the faith of many, who profess to believe on him, is weak; they cannot live upon his invisible actings. But here is the faith and patience of the church, of all sincere believers; in the midst of discouragement, reproaches, temptations, and sufferings they can relieve their souls with this, that "their Redeemer liveth, and that he shall appear again the second time," in his appointed season. Hence their continual prayer; the prayer of faith; "even so come Lord Jesus."

§8. To whom shall he thus appear? Of whom shall he be thus seen? (τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀποδεχομένοις) *to them that look for him.* His second illustrious appearance shall fill the whole world with its beams; the whole rational creation of God shall behold him. But the apostle treats of his appearance here with respect to the salvation of them to whom he appears; and this word, "*unto salvation*," is capable of a double explication; for it may refer either to *them* that look to be saved by him;—or, to his *appearance* for their salvation; the sense is good either way; the *manner* of his appearance is (χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας) *without sin.* This may respect, either *himself*, or the *church*, or *both*. In his first appearance he was *in himself* without sin; but his

great work was *about sin*; in what he had to do *for us* he "was made sin," he "bear our iniquities," and was treated both by God and man as the *greatest sinner*; he had all the *penal effects* and consequence of sin upon him; all the dolorous infirmities of nature, as fear, sorrow, grief, pain; all the sufferings that sin deserved, and the law threatened; but now he shall appear perfectly free from all these things, as a perfect conqueror over sin, in all its causes, effects, and consequences; again, it may respect the *church*; he will then have made an utter end of sin, in the whole church for ever; there shall not *then* be the least remainder of it; all its filth, guilt, and power; its *effects* in darkness, fear and dangers, shall be utterly abolished. The *guilt* of sin being done with the whole church shall then be *purified*, without spot and wrinkle, every way glorious; "sin shall be no more." Moreover, respect may be had to *both* himself and the church. The end of this appearance is (*εἰς σωτηρίαν*) *for the salvation* of them that look for him; if this word relate immediately to his "*appearance*," the meaning is, to *confer* eternal salvation upon them; if it respects "*them that look for him*," it expresseth the *qualification* of their persons, by the object of their faith and hope; they look for him to be perfectly and completely saved by him. Where both senses are equally true, we need not *limit* the signification to either.

§9. (IV.) Hence observe,

1. God hath eminently suited the means and causes of our spiritual deliverance, to the means and causes of our misery; that his own wisdom and grace may be exalted, and our faith established.

2. Death in the first institution of it was *penal*; and the entrance of it as a penalty keeps the fear of it in all living.

3. It is still penal, eternally penal, to all unbelievers; but there are *false notions* of it amongst men, as there are of all other things. It is the interest of all living to inquire diligently—what *death* will be to them.

4. The death of all is equally determined and certain in God's constitution; it hath various ways of approach to all individuals; hence it is generally looked on as an *accident* befalling this or that man; but the *law* concerning it is *general* and equal.

5. The ground of the expiation of sin by the offering of Christ is, that therein he bore its guilt, and the punishment due to it.

§10. We further observe,

1. Christ's appearance the *second time*, his return from heaven to complete the salvation of the church, is the great *fundamental principle* of our faith and hope, our great testimony against his and our adversaries; and,

2. Faith concerning the second coming of Christ is sufficient to support our souls, and to afford satisfactory consolation in all difficulties.

3. All true believers live in a waiting, longing expectation of the coming of Christ; and it is one of the most distinguishing characters of sincerity.

4. Then will be the greatest distinction amongst mankind, when Christ shall appear to the everlasting confusion of some, and the eternal salvation of others; this is what the world loves not to hear of.

5. At the second appearance of Christ there will be an end of all sin, both on *his* part and *ours*.

6. The communication of actual *salvation* to all believers, to the glory of God, is the final end of Christ's office.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

